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S. H. M. 1869,

THE

PRIMEVAL WORLD

OF

HEBREW TRADITION.

BY

FREDERIC HENRY HEDGE.

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Stanford Library

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ROBERTS BROTHERS.
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R. W. Miller
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I.

THE WORLD A DIVINE CREATION.

spirit is destined to be lord of this earth, and all its epochs in time past have been preparations for that end. There was a time when brute monsters possessed it wholly,—rude organizations long since extinct. Then it fell to the lot of man. The brute creation shrunk back when this new creature appeared. And all through the ages of human history the animal man has been ripening into spirit. One day he invented fire, and families were gathered. Another day he discovered iron, and cities were founded. He invented letters, and States were formed. Meanwhile, the indistinct mutterings of bestial nature ripened into articulate speech. More and more the jaw receded and the forehead advanced. The brain expanded; it lifted the skull and shaped it into a temple dome. The eye was lighted from within. Religion was born. More and more spiritual man became; more and more spiritual he is destined to be, until the carnal mind is quite put under, and the highest becomes the law and fixed habit of life.

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THE WORLD A DIVINE CREATION.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." — GENESIS i. 1.

WE have here the first proposition of human reason, as it shaped itself in the Hebrew mind. Whatever the learned may think of the authorship and antiquity of the Book of Genesis, there can be no doubt of the high antiquity of this proposition, of this doctrine, that God made heaven and earth. It is a great deal older than the Book of Genesis, as old almost as human reason itself. Here it stands in the fore-front of Hebrew literature, the morning-star of Semitic revelation, the first, impregnable position as it is the last result of human wisdom, the beginning and end of all rational cosmogony. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The origin

*Conf. Ennys & R
"Mosaic Cosmogony"
White's Battle-Field
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of things is divine. The universe is not self-existent, but derived. The spiritual is before the phenomenal, thought before thing, intelligence co-ordinate with being. This is the first teaching of reflective faith, the dictate of earliest wisdom. Here religion and philosophy meet and join hands.

I separate this first sentence from those which immediately follow. The reader will perceive how wide the gulf which divides them. This first sentence expresses a general and irrefragable truth. There follows a cosmogony which challenges criticism. Much ingenuity has been expended in vain attempts to reconcile the Bible account of creation with the commonly received conclusions of science. As if the interests of religion and man's spiritual well-being depended on the scientific accuracy of the Book of Genesis, nay, on the literal interpretation of that Book. What perverseness of unbelief can exceed the perverseness of religious bigotry which would make religion accountable for the views enter-

tained by remote antiquity on subjects which the latest science has scarcely yet explored,—the bigotry which fancies the credit of the Bible or the value of its spiritual revelations impaired by the fact that the writers thereof entertained the opinions common to their age on matters of scientific import? No reasonable mind will demand of the seer in the realm of spirit exact erudition concerning the things of material nature. To question a revelation of spiritual truth because of error in matters entirely foreign from the purpose of such revelation with which it may happen to be associated, is like rejecting a pearl because of the roughness of the shell which contained it, or want of culture in the diver who fetched it from the deep. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels,” and bibliolatry ought to see that, according to its own theory, the value of a revelation is not to be measured by the learning of the medium through which it flows, since, according to its own theory, the truth revealed is not a product of the

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human understanding, but a primary gift of God. The truths of science, which are truths of the understanding, have their date; they develop themselves progressively in the order of time, and are not to be anticipated by prophets and chosen men of God. But the truths of religion, which are truths of reason, are of no age; they are seen by men of all time to whom the word of God comes and in whom the Spirit of God breathes the revealing wisdom. They are seen by men unversed in science. They were seen here and there as clearly by men of old as in recent time.

The attempts to reconcile Scripture and science mistake the province and aim of the former. Morally and religiously, it is not of the slightest consequence that they should be reconciled. Each has its own appropriate sphere entirely distinct from the other, and the commentator who labors to vindicate the geological accuracy of Scripture by finding a way or a sense in which the creation of earth, sun,

and stars may be credibly brought within six days dishonors the Bible in effect as much as the superficial philosopher who rejects it because the work of creation is so represented in the Book of Genesis. No man who respects his own understanding and God's authority in it can believe that the rock formations whose steps, as studied by geology, measure vast ages, were instantaneous productions when the work of creation began; and no one who listens reverently to his own heart will spurn a book or collection of books so freighted with everlasting wisdom, and so manifestly stamped with the witness-seal of the Spirit, because he finds in it traditions which contradict his text-books. If, as astronomers assure us, there are stars whose light, to be seen by us, must have occupied more than ten thousand years in travelling hither, it follows that creation must be older than Biblical chronology would make it. But this no whit affects the truth of the proposition we are now considering. That, as we have seen, is en-

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tirely distinct in its scope and import from the story which succeeds.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." There was then a time when the heaven and the earth were not, and a day when they began to be. A time before the all-covering sky was spread, and the lights which illustrate the revolving hours were sown in the blue expanse; before the waters had receded from the face of the earth and the dry land emerged from the deep: a time when nothing was but God. In the contemplation of such a time we are lost in vague conjecture or steeped in brooding wonder. God is from everlasting, without date or beginning; yet "in the beginning" we are told he made heaven and earth. When was that beginning when the worlds were made? Reason rejects a date so recent as that of the "Mosaic chronology," as commonly understood. But instead of six thousand years, if we say six million, or six thousand million, or name any date which the human imagination may assign,

the difficulty still remains, the question still recurs : Why then ? Why not earlier ? And what was God doing before that date ? Any beginning, however remote, is still recent to the Being who has none. And before that beginning can we suppose a God inactive and unproducing, wrapped in the contemplation of himself and the solitary enjoyment of his own idea ? Such a God is incredible, inconceivable. Creation is the logical complement of Deity. We cannot separate the flowing from the Fountain, production from the all-producing Power. There never was a time when nothing was but God. "In the beginning was the Word." And that phrase, "in the beginning," is but a way of designating a dateless antecedence, which may with equal propriety be rendered, "without beginning." Without beginning, from everlasting, was the Word, the creative energy, divine self-manifestation. Whatever motive existed for creation at any given time must have existed from all eternity, since the Eternal, antecedent

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to creation could not have been motivated from without, and the motive power from within must have been from all eternity the same to immutable Wisdom.

From all eternity, therefore, we must suppose God to have exercised creative power. We must suppose eternal creation if we suppose an eternal Creator. These heavens, indeed, which now bend over us and the worlds that swim in their blue abyss may not have been the first-fruits of his Word. This earth of our abode may not have spun from everlasting as now it spins on its solar road. Creations endless may have passed away ere these morning stars sang together and the choral skies declared the glory of God. But beings, worlds, there must have been to reflect that glory and to occupy creative Love. These heavens and this earth had a beginning. There was a time when they were not, and a day when their genesis took place according to ideas eternal in the mind of God, who saw the worlds yet unformed in himself, in "the fruitful bo-

som of his own ideality,"* and called the things which were not as though they were.

Six days are assigned to the work of creation in Hebrew tradition. Whatever else we may understand by this statement, it indicates a perception in the writer that the world as now constituted was not an instantaneous birth, but a gradual formation, the growth of successive periods ; he calls them days, we will call them ages.† There was first a time when God said, Let there be light ! And immediately the newborn radiance streamed through space and filled the deep void with its silent presence. There was a time when the fiery ether collected its atoms and balled itself into suns and earths, which took their places and ranged themselves for the solemn dance whose measure is the measure of all the ages. Again, there was a time when the waters of this globe settled down

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† There is no reason to doubt that the text means literally *days* of twenty-four hours ; but the fact, if not the order of succession, was divined.

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in their beds and the dry land rose in continents stretching from north to south, here towering in granite masses to the skies, there spreading in dreary deserts or opening into fertile valleys and plains, watered by rolling streams and fitted for the dwelling of man. There was an age when the kingdom of plants was brought forth in its orders, from the clinging moss and sallow ocean-flower to the perfect tree, whose roots are in the earth and whose head is in the skies, and which blesses successive generations with its fruits and its shade. There was an age when the different tribes of animal nature swarmed into being, and "the moving creature that hath life after its kind" peopled the earth, the air, and the flood. And, last of all, there was an age when man, the noblest of earthly kinds, was formed "in the image of God," and set with his hands toward the earth and his face toward the heavens, to labor in the seen and aspire to the unseen, and by active beneficence reflect his divine Original.

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The length of these epochs who shall determine? Who can measure the time consumed in these formations? We only know that the earth has become what it is after many revolutions, that there was a time when the planet was covered with water, another when it bore certain monstrous forms of animal life, and that ages inestimable must have elapsed between the day when the earth first rolled in space and the birth of man.

If this view of creation were theory only, and not an assured conclusion of science, it would yet commend itself as coinciding with all our experience of divine operations. The method of God in the processes of nature is not instantaneous birth, but progressive formation. It proceeds by stages and degrees. Nothing bursts into being full grown and complete. The smallest flower that paints the borders of the spring does not leap from the earth with its petals all spread and its raiment all perfect. First the seed must burst its capsule, then the germ must

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start, then the blade appears and divides, and the bud must swell and the leaf unfold, and the colors must be stamped; and thus by slow degrees and successive stages the creation of that little being is wrought out. And in that production all the agencies of nature conspire. The earth must feed it with rich juices, the clouds must water it with fertile dews, the air must quicken it with subtile gases, the sun must paint it with warm beams, and all the stars must unite to hold up the planet from which it springs. If so much time and such an array of means are required to bring a single flower to the summit of its being, how many ages must have glided by before the earth, with its mountains and its forests, could reach the condition in which man first found it?

The patient method of divine operation rebukes the impatient zeal which thinks to create in a day what time and care alone can perfect. When material creation proceeds so slowly, shall the moral creation, the genesis of truth and good-

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ness in human society, be accomplished at once, by instantaneous reform? We may preach and persuade, we may agitate and legislate, we may plant and water, but the fruit must wait the fulness of time. This generation will not see its maturing, our children will not see it; ages must elapse before the ideal of a moral community can be fulfilled.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The act of creation to us is as inconceivable as its Author. Creation out of nothing is the ecclesiastical idea. But how, where nothing was, could something begin to be? Impressed with the difficulty of this conception, some have assumed an eternal, self-existing matter distinct from God, unconscious, inert, merely passive to divine operation, of which they suppose the universe was formed. But this supposition does but substitute a greater difficulty for a less. It is even more difficult to conceive of an uncreated, eternal, passive substance than it is to conceive of creation

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out of nothing. In fact, creation out of nothing means only that the worlds were formed of no pre-existing foreign substance, distinct from God. We are not, therefore, to infer that a new and foreign substance was called into being, but rather that the act of creation was the going forth of Deity from the secret of absolute Being into light and show. Creation is self-manifestation, the projection and reflection of the divine consciousness. Every material creature is the expression of an idea, and the word matter but a phrase by which to signify the reality of that idea. God in creating did not bring into being a new substance foreign to himself; he but uttered forms which subsist by his continuing effluence, and which, if he should withdraw his spirit, would instantly cease to be; as the landscape ceases to be for the eye when the light which showed it is withdrawn. The material creation has no independent existence; it exists as a constant showing of God, a stated communication between the supreme mind that

See Mill's Logic

words it and the finite minds which apprehend, which experience, which use and reflect it. These alone of God's creations truly exist,—if not by their own force, for their own sakes. The material creation exists only in God and in us. In God as idea and volition, in us as experience.

In all that God does we suppose a purpose, and that purpose, discoverable or undiscoverable, the human understanding will seek to explore. And so the human mind could not fail to inquire: *Why* God made heaven and earth? Why did a Being, complete in himself, and self-sufficing, come out of himself in creative action? The answer to this question is given in the nature of Deity as reason conceives it. It is given especially in that conception of Deity which we express when we say that God is Love. God created a universe because creation is a necessary constituent of the divine nature, and a universe the necessary complement of God. Deity cannot be without self-manifestation. As it

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is the nature of the sun to shine, of the fountain to flow, so it is the nature of Deity to give forth, to express and reflect himself in creation. He created and creates because Love must have an object to rejoice in and bless, because the all-loving would not abide in himself, in the solitary contemplation of his own idea, but chose to impart of his fulness to sentient beings, that life and joy might everywhere abound and everywhere reflect his Love.

He created and creates. The work of creation is not once for all, but continuous. It is not confined to one period in the life of God, but reaches from everlasting to everlasting. In all time past the Godhead has been unfolding his fathomless Self, and in all time to come will continue to unfold it. The Fountain is eternal, it can never cease to flow. The Love is infinite, it can never cease to impart of its fulness. These heavens and this earth must pass away, for they had a beginning, and whatever begins must end; but other creations will succeed; new orders of sen-

tient beings will express the riches and reflect the glory of the Ever-giving, the Ever-loving.

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"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." He made them for the occupancy, use, and education of rational and moral natures. The material creation exists for the sake of the moral; it derives its meaning from that. These visible heavens and this earth are types of an invisible, spiritual creation, whose import and purpose they reflect. In that spiritual creation we are agents and fellow-workers with God. In the material we produce nothing, we only mould into new forms the material products around us. The combined power and wisdom of human kind can produce no additional matter, nor increase by a single atom the substance of our globe. But in the realm of spirit we, too, create and bring forth. There every effort of the will is creation, and every deed a new birth. Our characters are our own. That which we are and do as moral beings we make and

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CHAP. I. <i>The World a Divine Creation.</i>	fashion ourselves. And this moral crea- tion in which we are fellow-workers is the only one in which we have any continu- ing place or lot,—the only one which itself has any abiding reality. The heav- ens and the earth which seem so real are but a spectacle, a passing entertainment, a vision shown by God and existing only as he shows it to the spirits with whom he thus communes; a transient experi- ence of the ever-living soul. It is some- thing more than a poet's rhetoric which affirms that "the great globe itself and all which it inherit shall dissolve." It is so- ber, scientific truth. That which we cre- ate for ourselves and within ourselves by <u>our moral agency is our only firm posses-</u> <u>sion; for us the only enduring creation.</u> What we rake together of this material is a loan from the Lord of life, a temporary trust which we yield with our breath. Our characters alone are truly ours, the workmanship of the spirit that is in us, a real, substantial creation. Here, then, in the realm of spirit, who labors faith-
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fully is like to God, a CREATOR. With the first and sublimest of God's attributes he may claim affinity. Here shall man work unwearied and unceasing, creating in himself "the heaven and the earth," — a heaven of wise thoughts, high purposes, pure affections; an earth well tilled and fruitful of good; a moral creation to have and to hold when this material "shall dissolve,

And like "an "insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind."

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MAN IN THE IMAGE OF GOD.

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“God created man in his own image. In the image of God created he him.” — GENESIS i. 27.

THE creation of man is thus distinguished in Hebrew tradition as peculiarly divine,—not only God-made, but God-like. First in rank, though last in time, this genesis completes the eternal circle of divine evolution which begins with God and ends with God, begins with God active and ends with God reflective, begins with God imaging and ends with God imaged.

“In the image of God created he him.” First, the fact of creation, then the kind. Man is created; he is not self-existent, but derived. He had a beginning. This is not a fact which we learn from history. For all that history knows, the race may have existed from all eternity, although

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the record of its existence embraces but a span of a few thousand years. It required a wisdom beyond the experience of history to teach a beginning of human-kind.

There was a first man, and that first man was not the first, but the last of earthly creations. In this postponement of human-kind to plant and brute there lies a profound meaning,—a meaning not explained or not exhausted by saying that the earth must first be stored with vegetable and animal for man's subsistence, and in all ways got ready for his reception, before he could be fitly placed upon it. If the animal man, for the reason assigned, behooved to be last of earthly kinds, still more, for other reasons, the intellectual and moral. It was meet that he who was to be the summit of creation should conclude all orders of being in himself and reflect them all, that he should have creation behind him and beneath him,—he being the goal in which all things terminate, toward which all things

point and strive,—the reason and moral of the visible universe, last link in the chain which binds the creature to God.

There was a first man. The question arises, whether one first man for the whole human family or one for each continent, or for each of the various races,—Caucasian, African, Malay, and others into which the naturalists divide mankind,—whether the human family originated from a single pair or has flowed together from different centres in different lands. Either supposition is equally consistent with the Biblical narrative, which, though it mentions but one first pair, and derives from that the three main streams of humanity represented by Shem, Ham, and Japhet, does not affirm that all human beings that have ever existed in the world were descended from that pair, and that God created no other original. This may seem to be implied in the tenor of the narrative, but is not a necessary inference from it; at any rate, is not a Biblical dogma. If the diverse origin of the human race can be

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proved from other sources, the Bible is not so committed to the opposite view that the doctrine of the single origin and the credit of Scripture must stand or fall together. The authors of these Scriptures adopt the views of their time on such subjects, without inculcating as doctrine the views they adopt. When, therefore, theologians maintain as Biblical doctrine the single origin of the human race they mistake the aim and purport of those writings. The question is not one of theology, but of history and physiology, which the learned in those sciences must settle as they can. At present it remains an unsettled question. Meanwhile, this at least must be conceded, that mankind, if not descended from one original pair, are yet essentially one family, that the differences which divide the various races are extrinsic and accidental, while their unity is intrinsic and essential. One and the same nature pervades all varieties of man "on all the face of the earth." Man as the subject of history and divine educa-

tion is one. All the nations embraced in the scheme and scope of progressive humanity are one. If not descended from one pair, they are one in idea and destination. It does not seem likely that the negro and the white man came of one stock. Yet who shall say what changes time and clime may have wrought? The advocates of negro slavery were wont to argue from the present inferiority of the African race that bondage is their true destination. To make out their case, they should have proved that the negro belongs not to the human family. The proof would be their incapability, under favorable circumstances, of civil society and historic development. That is a point which time alone can test. If not capable of civil society, they do not belong to the human family. In that case they will finally disappear from the earth.

Another point suggests itself in connection with the origin of man. Recent zoölogists of high repute incline to the belief that man was not an original creation, but

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has grown by gradual development from the lower strata of the animal world; specifically — as the latest step in this process — from the simian tribe. The orang-outang, under favorable circumstances, in the course of long ages, grew, it is supposed, into first the Hottentot; then, by gradual improvement, into the finished European style. How reconcile with this view the spiritual type supposed to be distinctive of human kind? with the image of God man's special and distinguishing privilege?

It will be long, I suspect, before this view universally prevails; before it takes the character and rank of scientific certainty. Some of the greatest names in science are found in opposition to it; among them our own Agassiz, the fundamental idea of whose view of nature it contradicts. One is sometimes tempted to think that the transformation may have been the other way, — a change of type from human to simian, — that the monkey may be a corruption of human nature sunk by moral

and intellectual degeneracy into that too faithful caricature. A Mussulman legend recounts the metamorphosis of certain mockers who, jeering at Moses and his teachings, were turned into apes, and in that condition continued to jeer and chatter ever after. There are tendencies in man of which the ape may be regarded as the fit expression and consummation; and none more justly so than mocking at truth, the great and serious truths of humanity. If anything can make an ape of a man it is that.

But suppose the Development-theory, so called, could be established on scientific and indisputable grounds, there is nothing in that theory at which theology need be alarmed. What the naturalist means by man in this connection is one thing, what the Bible means is another. The one is speaking of the animal man, the other of the moral and spiritual. Grant that the human animal developed itself by gradual ascent and modification from the lower orders of animal life, it does not follow

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that the human soul developed itself from the brute. There must still have been a time,—if man at this day is anything more than the highest animal,—there must have been a time when a human soul, with its characteristic attributes and belongings, was first lodged in that animal frame, when the heavenly was first wedded to the earthly. There must still have been a first man, in the Bible sense; and that first man was a new creation, a creation bearing the image of God.

And what are we to understand by “the image of God”? Was the writer thinking of the human form, so far transcending all other forms of animated nature in beauty, dignity, variety of adaptation, in extent of function and organic endowment, as to justify the poet’s phrase, “the human form divine”? Did he suppose that God, like his creatures, must exist in a bodily shape, and having conceived the Creator invested with a human form, did he mean to say that the Deity conferred his own form upon man? I believe

that something more and better was intended by this expression. It meant in the thought of the historian what we understand by that phrase, — a spiritual similitude. Man in his original radical idea, man as spirit, is divine. This is the import of the saying, "God created man in his own image."

The Bible contains no truth more profound. And the Bible alone, of ancient writings, contains it, or expresses it, I think, with such distinctness. The wisdom which inspired these pages, in all the annals of ancient wisdom, alone enunciates in adequate terms this great intuition. We repeat the commonplace, and think it so obvious that all men in all time must needs have perceived it. But what fetishist or polytheist in that age perceived or said it? And the world was filled with such when these Scriptures were written. How many even now perceive the full significance that lies in it?

Man in the image of God! Where in human converse does that image appear?

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Look at man in some aspects, and he seems more removed from all divine similitude than even the brute. See him the victim of coarse animal passions, besotted with gluttony and drink; see him wallowing in lust or rabid with greed of gain, ravenous, cruel, grasping, oppressing, destroying. Will any one pretend that a creature like this is made in the image of God? Certainly not, for the creature so described is not man. In such cases the animal has overlaid and concealed, and even for the time suppressed the man. That slave of appetite and passion, that grovelling sensualist, that persecutor and destroyer, is a human animal, not a spiritual nature, of which alone the divine similitude is predicated. The true human in him is not yet apparent, is not yet developed, is dormant and dead. The doctrine is, not that men as we find them, but that man in his idea, is divine. That divine man is embodied in a human animal; it is the necessary form of his earthly life, the medium by which he converses with

the world of sense in which he is temporarily immersed. In the genuine man the spirit so possesses, informs, and commands the animal that nothing obscures the divine image; it shines distinctly and victoriously through. But often the animal is developed at the expense of the spiritual, it supplants the spiritual; the image of God is obscured, suppressed.

On the strength of such examples theologians have affirmed human nature itself to be godless and corrupt, as if human nature were truly represented in those examples. No representation of human nature can be regarded as legitimate which does not express the original idea of man. He only in whom the spiritual has gained the ascendancy over the animal and holds it in subjection, he only with whom the divine purpose, perceived or surmised, is the rule of life, exhibits the image of God in his person. Only he is truly man.

Society, as now constituted, bears not that image, — as a whole, is far from divine. And yet if we search for it in frank-

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ness and sincerity, how much that is truly divine we shall find in the present and in every past age of society. How much of disinterested benevolence, how much of genuine, unadulterated love, how much of self-sacrificing devotion, how many heroes, patriots, martyrs, who have offered up their lives for the right! Society as we have it is composed of steep contradictions. Side by side with the hellish atrocities of war we have its heaven-born charities. The "Sanitary Commission," with its tender solace, follows in the steps of Carnage. Tender and delicate women, bred in the lap of luxury, renounce their pleasant homes and take upon themselves the office of nurses, breathing the infected air of hospitals, watching at the bedside of loathsome disease. Side by side with the haunts of vice, the abomination of cities, we have houses of prayer reared by the spirit of piety, sacred to faith and the purest aspirations of the soul. Such are the contradictions of which life is made up. It is a tale of sharp contrasts

and huge discrepancies, of godlike virtues and hellish crimes. But who will say that the nobler part and product in these contrasts is not as genuine a manifestation of human nature as the baser and infernal? I say it is the truer and more legitimate manifestation of the two. I say, this is legitimate and that is not. These charities and pieties are the normal products of human nature, those vices and atrocities, spurious and abnormal. Man is truly himself in the one and is not himself, but "beside himself," in the other. No theologian is authorized to point to those offences as the real human, and to found his doctrine of human nature upon them.

The real convictions of men, the spontaneous unbiassed convictions of the race, are embodied in their speech. We have the word, Humane. It means the same as human, that which is agreeable to the nature of man. And it means also merciful, pitiful, loving, kind,—qualities conformed to the nature of God, of whom these are distinguishing attributes. We

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have, then, the testimony of language that what is peculiarly and emphatically human is also divine.

And we have in the Christian records the testimony of finished humanity. The appearance of a character like Jesus in our human world is a reaffirmation of the truth of the old Hebrew saying, that man was made in the image of God, a proof that the innermost, original nature of man is divine, that to be truly human is to be one with God.

This is the idea which underlies the Church dogma of the Incarnation, though not the meaning which the popular theology attaches to that doctrine. The feeling which prompted the decision of the Church in shaping its christology, was that human nature can only be redeemed from sin by actual contact with Godhead. How to bridge the gulf between God and man was the problem which the Church proposed to itself. In the animal kingdom we perceive a regular gradation in descending series through the simiæ, through

the mammals, through the vertebrates, serpents, molluscs, medusæ, down to the infusoria, the rhizopod, or whatever may be the lowest term and extreme limit of animated nature. But the spiritual kingdom, as conceived by the Church, had no such continuity; the series was broken, a link was missing between man and God. Push your scale up as far as you may through the heavenly principalities, from angel to archangel, still the highest finite is a creature, it had a beginning; between it and the uncreated there is a gulf which the act of creation does not bridge. To meet this difficulty the Church for "creation" said "generation." The "Son" was generated, and that from eternity, and so partakes of the substance of Godhead, and, being incarnated in a human individual, communicates that nature to man. Thus the atonement is accomplished between the human and divine; man is reunited to God. I shall not stop to point out the logical inadequacy of this theory which required the audacious doctrine of Tran-

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substantiation to carry out its principle. It suffices to say that if the Church had understood and duly considered the meaning of these words, "God created man in his own image," this elaborate theory would have been superfluous. God by his image in man is in virtual contact with all in whom that image lives. Man fell, man falls, the image is dimmed, overlaid, but not erased. It needs to be revived, and when revived, man is once more in union and communion with God. God with man and in man, so far as he is spiritual, that is the real import of the doctrine of Incarnation. Christ as the "Son of Man" is the type of genuine humanity. He is the "second man," as Adam is the first, the representative of the real spiritual, as Adam is of the possible. Not less human than Adam, because more divine, but the more so on that account. Adam represents humanity in its earlier, transient phase, Christ represents it in its essential, eternal nature. The second man is more human than the first, Christ more

human than Adam. And "as in Adam all die," as the earthly nature is perishing, "so in Christ all are made alive"; the divine in man is eternal. Christ reaffirms in his life what the old Scripture had affirmed in words, — that man is the image of God, that in human nature God sees himself and expresses himself as in no other creature.

If man is the image of God, it follows not only that man — the spiritual man — is divine, but also that God is human. All creation is the realization of divine ideas, the going forth of God from the secret of inscrutable Being in self-reflecting, self-manifesting action. The last step in this process of divine self-manifestation is man, in whom above all created natures the Creator realizes his Godhead. There is no step between God and man that is not virtually included in human nature. All we can ever know of the divine must be through the human. Whatever process may await us in the far future, to whatsoever height of being and of action

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the spirit may attain when this mortal shall have put on immortality, we can come no nearer to God than man. We can approach him only through perfected humanity, and all we can ever add to our knowledge of his nature will be derived from successive developments of our own. We may hope to see God, in the great hereafter, if we are in the line of ascending spirits who put off the defilements of earth and cast death and hell beneath them as they rise ; but not as an object external to ourselves. We shall see him as the pure in heart see him,—in the mirror of their purity, in perfect emancipation from self, in ever-growing holiness, in ever-expanding love. We commune with him, not by going out of ourselves, but by sinking deeper and deeper within. Deep in the centre of every heart he has stamped and imaged and planted himself, and when we most truly possess ourselves we are nearest to God.

III.

MAN IN PARADISE.

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"And the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it." — GENESIS ii. 15.

It has long been a matter of debate between ethnologists and theologians whether primitive man was intellectually mature or rudely ignorant. Did the species start from the lowest ~~plane~~ of human existence, but one remove from the brute, or begin its career at that advanced point of intelligence and faculty which now distinguishes the fully developed civilized man from the human animal?

Ethnology reasoning from analogy adopts the former view; maintains that the race commenced in ignorance and brutality and advanced step by step from the lowest grade to the highest yet attained, — from cannibalism up to European and Anglo-

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American civilization. Theology, on the contrary, infers from the Bible that man was created intellectually and spiritually mature, and not only mature, but (according to some theologians) perfect, with faculties as far exceeding anything witnessed in subsequent time as the highest developments known to us exceed the rudeness of savage life.

We have no sufficient data as yet to establish a conclusive decision of this question, which is somewhat involved in the previous question whether human kind originated from a single pair or from several independent centres. On the supposition of a single origin of the human race the latter theory fails to explain the present existence of savage races, which in that case are intelligible only as wrecks of extinct civilizations. But, if we suppose a various origin from independent centres, the theory of a rude beginning encounters a serious difficulty in the fact that such a progress as is claimed from the rudest condition of man to the highest is not sub-

stantiated by ethnological observation of existing races. For, though it is true that the most civilized races of to-day have passed through a period of comparative barbarism, it is also true that their civilization is the growth of a graft from a foreign stock, and that the savage races of to-day refuse that graft and die out when brought in close contact with civilized nations.

On the other hand, theology certainly errs in its view of original man, as inferred from the Book of Genesis. The condition of Adam in Paradise is not represented as one of perfection, but simply as one of moral innocence. In fact, this question, like so many others which the learned debate, is a question but of words and names. The two parties are discussing different things, the one the beginnings of a zoölogical species, the other the beginnings of the human family. The aim of the Biblical narrative is to paint the beginnings of the human family,—not the human animal, but man so far developed

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as to be susceptible of moral ideas and subject to the moral law. We may suppose as many ages as science requires, or conjectures, between the first of the human species and the Adam of Genesis without doing violence to the *spirit* of the story, although the letter seems certainly to identify the two. Granting that the human species began in savage ignorance, it is none the less true that human society began at a certain advanced stage of intellectual development. And this beginning of society—the beginning of humanity proper—it is which Hebrew tradition contemplates.

We assume, then, for man in Eden that point in the progress of human development—preceded, it may be, by ages of mere animality—at which our historic progenitors began to be capable of moral agency and capable of social union. By Adam in Eden we will understand the beginning of human society. The date of that beginning it is impossible to determine. The learned, however, are agreed that the scale of Mosaic chronology is too

contracted to accommodate the historic process implied in it, and that thousands of years must be added to the Biblical conception of the age of man.

As to the whereabouts; the locality of the Garden of Eden, the first experiment of social life, is a question of easier solution. The region indicated in the book of Genesis, provided it can be geographically verified as an actual section of the earth's surface, is the answer to this question, — an answer in which historic tradition and philosophic conjecture will probably be found to coincide with Biblical lore. There is some difficulty, however, in ascertaining the precise locality intended in the narrative. The region is thus defined in the text:—

“And a river went out of Eden to water the garden: and from thence it was parted and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good [or pure]: there is bdellium and

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the onyx-stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.* Interpreted according to the letter, this statement certainly defines no terrestrial locality. A description which brings into one view, as parts of one territory, Assyria and a province of South Arabia (for such is the Havilah of Scripture), and which makes the Euphrates the confluent of a river of Ethiopia, is altogether useless as a topographical guide to any actual portion of the earth's surface. Accordingly, this description of Paradise has been transferred by modern critics from the region of geography to that of poetry. But when we consider that two of the rivers here indicated are actual geographical rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, — Hiddekel being the Hebrew name

* The following geographical criticism is from Bunsen's "Bibelwerk."

of the latter river,—and that these two are neighbors and confluent, as here represented, and further that the Tigris, as here stated, is in near relation with Assyria,—not indeed to the east of, but, according to another rendering of the words, before * Assyria, i. e. before coming to Assyria;—when we consider this fact, the presumption is that the writer intended to describe an actual region of the globe. A mixture of geographical with merely ideal localities is a very improbable supposition. The problem of constructive criticism is, if possible, by a new analysis of the terms employed, to reconcile with this geographical position those parts of the statement which seem to conflict with it. This problem has been attempted in our day with apparent success. Recent investigation finds in the Pison and Gihon of the text two rivers belonging to the same region with the Tigris and the Euphrates. Pison is identified with the river Phasis, which

* Namely, to one living west of that river, say in Mesopotamia, in which region the tradition is supposed to have originated. See Bunsen, *in loco*.

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empties into the Euxine and Gihon with the river Araxes, which empties into the Caspian. Havilah is found to be Colchis, the celebrated gold-land of the ancients; and the Hebrew name for Ethiopia;—*Cush*, by a slight change in the spelling, becomes *Cus* (Cussæi or Cossæi), the name of an ancient people inhabiting a part of the territory of Media.

According to these determinations, the Eden of Scripture was situated in the highlands of Armenia, in what is now a portion of Turkey, between the Caucasas and the Euphrates. An Aryan tradition, wholly independent of the Hebrew, refers the origin of the Aryan family to a region directly east of this, which it characterizes* as the land of purity, the original gift of (*Ormuzd*) the Good Spirit, whose enemy (Ahriman), the Principal of Evil, creator of the Serpent, changed the climate of this region of delight, and compelled the fathers to wander forth from their early home.†

* "Bibelwerk," Vol. V. pp. 46, 47.

† "In the midst of this region," says Bunsen, "the

Fact and allegory are so blended in these records that criticism cannot always distinguish between them. It is not easy to disentangle the historic thread of primeval tradition from its mythical accompaniment. The story of the Fall is best understood as pure allegory, but the scene of that Fall, the Eden of Scripture, — that is, a beginning of human society in the region here indicated, and under auspices fitly expressed by the word “garden,” — I believe to be essentially historical. Other nations have similar traditions. Greek and Roman writers tell of a Golden Age of innocence, when men lived happily, subsisting on the free and spontaneous bounty of nature, when greed of gain was not, and violence and strife had no place or part in human life. Indian, Persian, Egyptian antiquity discovers traces of a like faith, which can only be explained, or is

naturalists of our time have discovered traces of a great and comparatively recent convulsion, the consequence of which was the formation of the Caspian Sea and the desert character of a large portion of the neighboring land.”

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best explained, by a corresponding verity. Philosophy may dispute the tradition as a past reality, may reject it as a fact of history, but philosophy loves to contemplate the idea as a final result, as the consummation of the earthly life. Philosophy loves to occupy itself with the reconstruction of the Garden of Eden, that is, with a scheme of society purged of the evils that infest the present and have plagued all former time; a state where violence and fraud shall no more molest and wars shall cease, where the law of love shall reign supreme and shed eternal sunshine on the soul; a commonwealth of regenerate and perfected humanity, a paradise of innocence and peace. The Golden Age, philosophers have said, belongs to the future, not to the past; Eden is before us, not behind, not a loss to be deplored, but a possibility for which we are to strive.

This we may accept as the moral of the story. It is true that what the Garden of Eden imports to us is not a loss, but an aspiration and a hope. Not sorrow for

the past, but a motive for the future, is the lesson taught by this ancient tale. Whatever has been may be again, and if, far away in the earliest past, beyond the reach of contemporary records, known only to dim tradition, there existed a state of society in which man was better and more blest than now, in harmony with nature and at peace with himself, unvexed with care and untrammelled by sin, his bread sufficient, his being secure, and all his faculties and passions in tune, then we may hope that far away in the long and unsearchable future, when civilization shall have finished its course and divine education accomplished its work, the time will return of that blest estate when life shall be free and humanity true, and Eden re-establish itself with firmer conditions and a better hope,—an Eden based on insight instead of instinct, with the wisdom of all time for its illumination and all human experience for its guide.

Reading the story in this light, we say

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that a *Garden* is the destined abode of civilized man. It will be the last as it was the primeval estate. By a garden I mean cultivated and transfigured nature. There exists a relation between nature and man which rightly understood, and realized in corresponding institutions, makes earth a garden. At present the life of man is far from expressing this relation. A false civilization, founded in selfish passions, has estranged man from nature, and that estrangement has increased with the progress of society. Among the bad results of this estrangement we may reckon the existence of crowded cities, and the sickly and vicious life which they engender. Moral and physical disorders have multiplied as population concentrated itself in certain localities. A large proportion of the crimes which infest society are the necessary offspring of this unnatural life. Civilization is nature developed. A healthy civilization is nature developed to a point where each individual enjoys the full exercise of all his faculties, and where

the wants of one part of the community do not corrupt and enslave the rest. If, as we are told, the savage is not the natural state of man, neither is the life of crowded cities the natural state. The true state is equally remote from either of these extremes. It is one in which man is in right relations with nature and in which brute nature has been regenerated by human art and made to bring forth ampler fruits and nobler than it yields in its primal state. Such, we may suppose, will be the condition of perfected man, — a reproduction of the garden life. Consummate culture will return to nature, and return to nature will give Eden. Whatever is false and degrading in civilization will be done away, its fearful inequalities, the disproportion of labor and compensation, the dear-bought luxury of the few, the ill-requited service of the many, and all the crimes and distresses which spring from abject poverty on the one hand and inordinate wealth on the other. Man will live nearer to nature, there will be a rela-

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tion of reciprocal service between them ; according as he renders he will receive, according to his use will be his possession.

For observe, that man was commanded "to dress and to keep the garden" in which he was placed. The Paradise of tradition was not a state of passive, unconditional enjoyment, nor will any future paradise be such. Man will never know an Eden consisting in exemption from labor. Labor is not an accident of this our present imperfect state, but a law of man's nature which no change of circumstance and no amount of culture can ever abolish. Labor is needful, not only as a means of support, but also and more as a means of education. We must labor not merely because we have animal wants to be supplied, but because we have mental faculties to be developed and perfected. But all labor is not equally conducive to this end. The labor enforced by necessity, the irksome toil for needful bread, is comparatively barren of moral advantage. That

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labor only is truly profitable to which the laborer is prompted by free choice and for which the enjoyment he finds in it is itself the best compensation. At present the greater part of man's labor has no end but daily bread. The majority are doomed to lifelong tasks for the bare support of animal life. This is not the true idea of man, nor the true destination of human kind. Labor in a perfected state will have other objects than meat and drink. It has been computed that four hours a day of well-directed effort from all who are capable of labor would be sufficient for the animal wants of the race. When those wants have been supplied, if ever that better state shall arrive, the end of labor will not be private gain, but the common good; not to acquire for the sake of acquiring, but to create for the sake of creating, to dress and keep the garden, not to monopolize and gormandize its fruits. Each individual will find the sphere and the function to which he is adapted by his peculiar gift. His

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work will no longer be an irksome task imposed by hard necessity, but an art which he prosecutes for its own sake and the general good. He will labor as God labors, not in drudgery but in sport, not in the spirit of bondage but in the spirit of love, from the free determination of an active nature which seeks to unfold and to manifest itself in endless production.

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Will man in Eden have private possessions, or will all things be common to all? Property, so far as it represents the individual and proportionate labor of the owner, is a natural right, a thing that must always be, because eternally fit. Property otherwise acquired is booty, and must pass away with other injustices. As society is now constituted, the origin of property is partly labor and partly the act of the stronger. The superior strength may act as force or as capital; the principle is the same. Such is the property claimed and allowed by human laws in untilled and unoccupied lands. The earth is the prod-

uct of no man's industry except as reclaimed and improved by toil. The natural right of man covers only so much of the earth's surface as he actually uses. What is over and above this is directly or indirectly the product of force. All property in unoccupied land, when traced to the first claimant, will be found to have its origin in forcible seizure on the part of some government or chartered company, which, having first usurped, undertakes to dispose of the earth as if it were a product of their own creation. In this way the territory of this continent was seized and disposed of by governments which had no more right to the soil than they had to the people who dwelt in it. The whole system of landed property rests on the assumption that might makes right. But waiving this point, the great disparities of human life are due to the facility with which, in the present state of society, one class of men can avail themselves of the labors of another class without adequate compensation. The earth is wide

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enough and rich enough for all who live in it. If conventional right were identical with natural right, if no one could appropriate more of the earth's products than he can use, then each might appropriate as much as he requires, and none would suffer need. Instead of pining with want, or earning a scanty subsistence by ill-paid toil, as is now the case with so large a portion of the human family, all might live, as God intended, a free and honored life.

Undoubtedly the present system has its uses. It is easy to see how the crowded and struggling life which man now leads has served to develop the uttermost resources of matter and of mind, and thus to prepare the way for that better state which shall blend in one all that nature confers with all that art creates,—the simplicity of Eden with the last results of civilized life. Nevertheless, it is certain that the present system is not to be perpetual. No rational person who considers the enormous injustice of the presently

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existing social order, the bondage, the ignorance, the privation of the many, contrasted with the lot of the privileged few, — that unnatural relation which suffers one man to riot in abundance wrung from the sweat of his brother, and condemns that brother to lifelong hardship, — no one who considers these things, and who believes in a wise and righteous rule over all, can imagine this to be the final and true destination of man. The time must come when these discrepancies shall be done away, when the reign of superior might shall give place to that of superior wisdom and virtue, when society, no longer founded in force but in love, no longer a system of self-defence, but of mutual service, shall combine for the equal good of all, and when the outward condition of each shall be the measure of his actual worth.

Thus may we hope that the paradise of unconscious innocence will be replaced by a paradise of conscious virtue. The first Eden was the native dower of undisci-

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plined man; the second will be the end of discipline.

The highest good is not a gift but a growth, and not the growth of a few generations, but the growth of millennial ages, — a growth whose root was in the bosom of the first-born, and whose full developments will tell the story and carry the fortunes of human kind through incalculable time. The progress of humanity will not be forced. The heavenly graces are gaining on the kingdom of error and sin, but only as the new-formed continent gains on the lessening deep. Slowly and reluctantly the hungry element retires; not years but centuries chronicle its ebb.

By no aggressive acts of violence can our impatience speed the work; these only serve to obstruct and retard it. The evil that is in the world can be abolished only by supplanting it with good. In the order of Providence the moral and social improvement of the race is effected by gradual propagation from mind to mind. The best we can do for the regeneration

of our kind is to be regenerate ourselves. By faithful occupation and due cultivation of our appointed sphere, by making that to blossom with good, we may help to plant a new Eden in the earth.

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IV.

THE BRUTE CREATION.

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"And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them. And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." — GENESIS ii. 19.

THE Hebrew conception of the brute creation, as existing for the sake of man (so different from that of the Hindu mind) could hardly fail to find expression in the early speculations of that self-exalting race. Here we have it in the second account of creation, which differs, the reader will perceive, very widely from the first. In the first account the Elohist* represents man as the last creature formed, — the closing act of the great week of

* Two independent documents seem to have been used by the compiler of the book of Genesis, one in which God is called Elohim and one in which he is called Jahveh or Jehovah; hence the terms Elohist and Jehovist.

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births. In the second the more national Jehovist makes him anterior to the brute, in order, it would seem, to emphasize his position as sovereign lord for whom all that has life on the earth exists. According to the Jehovist it is not till the Garden of Eden has been planted, and man installed in it, that the animal tribes are created and pass in review before him their master, and receive from him their appropriate designation. This is the beginning of that supremacy which, according to the Hebrew idea, belongs to man as natural sovereign of the animal world. To name is to class, to subordinate, to subject. Man asserts his superiority over the brute creation in this that he can name and classify them, not they him. He subjects them in his thought, and so demonstrates the ascendancy of thought and the thinking mind over dumb, irrational life. No doubt aboriginal man was dimly conscious of this ascendancy. No doubt he discerned or suspected in himself a higher type and a nobler calling as he gazed on

those animated but unconscious natures, as he looked into those eyes through which no rational soul looked back into his own. He found there no response to his thought and no "helpmeet" for his affections; he felt that these creatures belonged to another sphere, that between his nature and theirs an impassable gulf was set. "And Adam gave names to all cattle and to the fowls of the air and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was found no help meet for him." Only in Eve he saw himself reflected and reproduced; in her he welcomed his own. "This is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh."

The brute world still confronts the human as in the beginning. The "Lord God" who "brought" the tribes of earth and air to the first man still brings them as objects for man to consider and to name. A rich and manifold world it is, this brute creation! Its place and function in the universal economy is a topic of more than speculative interest. This,

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too, is a part of the great Revelation, a chapter in the God-given Bible of nature. To what purpose this multitudinous array and endless variety of animal life? The human mind constitutionally inclines to teleological judgments. The idea of use, the idea answering to the question, wherefore? to what end? intrudes itself in all our inquiries. We are not content with the simple existence of any finite nature; we seek in every object some ulterior end, a use in relation to something else, a purpose beyond itself. This want of the mind is not always satisfied by what the senses report or science reveals. This ulterior end is not always discoverable. We can generally detect the use of parts in relation to a given whole. We determine a purpose for which an object exists in relation to its own sphere; the difficulty lies in determining the ulterior end of that sphere,—the use of the whole. An animal being given, we can trace the relation of part to part and find a use for every organ and an adaptation of every

member to the comfort and well-being of the creature so organized. But when we seek further and inquire the purpose for which that animal exists, its use in relation to a higher end, that question is not so easily solved,—is insoluble on merely teleological grounds. Man as the head of earthly creations is apt to refer all things to himself, and to fancy that other animals exist for his use alone, as ministers to his need and pleasure. The horse exists for the sake of the saddle, the cattle for their draught and their flesh, the elephant for its ivory, the whale for its oil. And as for those animals whose service he has not learned to command, from whose existence he has yet derived no apparent advantage, he is fain to suppose that in some mysterious way they also assist in this ministry and are made conducive to his well-being.

Spiritually considered, the brute creation may be said to exist for man, as the visible embodiment of spiritual truths. As such, it derives from him its true and best

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import. Inferior animals are prophetic of man, they are graduated approaches to his perfect organism, the articulations of a series which finds its consummation in "the human form divine." Lavater found but twenty-four removes in the scale of beauty between the features of the frog and the face of the Apollo Belvidere,—each successive delineation resembling its predecessor so nearly as to be distinguishable only on minute examination. Spiritually speaking, man is the end and aim of the animal world. But we are not, therefore, to assume that animals exist for the sake of man in the base utilitarian sense, as if their highest use were to minister to his personal necessities. To prove the insufficiency of this view we have only to go a step further and inquire the use of man himself. Do you say that man exists for the service of his Master? The same may be said, for aught we know, of all animals. Do you say that man exists for his own satisfaction and joy in being? The same is true of other tribes. The happiness of

all his creatures we must believe to be equally dear to the Maker of all, and the well-being of each as much the end for which that creature exists as human well-being is the end of man. The joy of an insect sporting in the sun is as much an end of God's creation as the supreme ecstasy of an immortal soul. The lower orders exist not for the sake of man alone any more than man exists for theirs. If viewed collectively, he is their head and they his members; viewed individually, they have an independent existence of their own, and the same right that he has to their place in nature and their share in its joys. The brute creation, it is likely, existed for ages before man arrived on the earth; it might continue to exist though man were destroyed. It exists for its own sake as well as man's, and because the infinite Father, though sufficient to himself and infinitely blest in his own perfection, has not chosen to abide in self-contemplation, but has poured himself forth in creative action, producing a universe of

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sentient beings out of the fulness of his thought and love. The greatest possible amount of sentient existence compatible with the greatest amount of individual well-being, and, conversely, the greatest amount of individual well-being compatible with the largest number of individuals;—this I suppose to be the aim, plan, and final cause of creation. This end is attained, not by making a few individuals supremely happy, but by making an infinity of beings partially happy,—each as perfect in its way and sphere as the welfare of the whole will allow.

Hence the unmeasured, immeasurable extent and variety of animated nature, peopling all worlds and filling every particle of matter with life and joy. But a small portion of this immensity is known to us. The task of naming the creatures of earth which the “Lord God” assigned to the first man will hardly be completed by the last. We know not how many millenniums man has had his being on this planet, but we know that all these

millenniums have not sufficed to finish the lesson of zoölogy assigned to Adam in Eden. Many thousands of animals man has noted and set down in his text-books, but every year adds new discoveries, and who can say what numbers may still have eluded his search, since every drop of water is peopled with forms of animal life whose existence is appreciable only by magnifying instruments which increase a thousand-fold the visual power of the eye? No marvel of creation is more astounding than the sumless profusion, the prodigality of animal life which we encounter in those microscopic recesses where science shows us

“All matter quick and bursting into birth,”

especially if we include the fossil world, together with existing life, in our view. Dr. Lardner asserts that among the Pyrenees whole mountains consist of little else than the fossilized remains of minute shell-fish, which it must have taken innumerable centuries to accumulate.

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Mr. Ellis in his "Chemistry of Creation" * tells us that most of the limestone of the world is made up of the relics of insects possessing the faculty of separating the salts of lime from the waters of the ocean. Another class of insects is found in a certain species of stone in such numbers that two thousand millions have been computed to the cubic inch. Of other terrestrial kinds who can say what unknown tribes may yet lurk in the bosom of the earth and the depths of the sea? And then, if we carry our thought beyond this earth, who can guess what wealth of animated nature may people the orbs which accompany ours in its solar round, what countless myriads of living forms the sovereign sun, a million times larger than our earth, may hide beneath its veil of light; or what new and unimaginable aspects the brute creation may assume in the star-groups which island the upper deep! Doubtless, these worlds are also the abodes of living, sentient be-

* Quoted in "Preadamite Man."

ings, children of one Parent, clients of one Bounty, inspired by one Soul.

The Hebrew idea of the brute creation is that of a world of which man is the absolute and rightful sovereign as well as the animal head. The Old Testament, it is true, exhibits marks of occasional sympathy with the lower orders, as in that beautiful one hundred and fourth Psalm, and in the sublime strains of the Book of Job. But, on the whole, the Hebrew feeling in relation to brutes is best represented in those portions of their Scriptures which figure the inferior animals as given over to man unconditionally, for his good pleasure. "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every fowl of the air and upon all the fishes of the sea ; into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you ; even as the green herb have I given you all things." This old tradition dating from the time of the patriarchs the Psalmist exultingly accepts: "Thou hast put all things under

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* How far did Hebrew creation from Scripture.

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his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the fowls of the air and the fishes of the sea."

The Hebrew looked upon the animal world as existing only for the sake of man; and though, as I said, occasional traces of sympathy appear, the prevailing sentiment seems to have been indifference or contempt. A remarkable illustration of this is the way in which the Scriptures speak of dogs, the most moral of brutes. It is a curious fact that there is not a single instance in the Old and New Testaments — I mean in the canonical books — in which dogs are spoken of otherwise than in terms of abhorrence and contempt. In the apocryphal Book of Tobit mention is made of a dog without the accompanying note of scorn. And this in the ancient literature of the Hebrews, so far as I know, is the only exception. It is not a pleasing feature of the Hebrew character. In this respect the Hebrew religion contrasts unfavorably with that of the Hindus, although vastly superior to it in things more essential. The Hindu mind regards the brute



creation as having equal rights with the human, as having an equal right to be, existing equally for its own sake, or as manifestation, equally sacred, of the one eternal indivisible Being, present alike in all the kingdoms of nature, and equally at home in all; delighting in all and justified in all. The brute no more exists for man than man exists for the brute; both are children of one Father, both bear his signature in the miracle of life. As animals he cares equally for both,—as much for the animal as he does for the animal man. Apart from the spiritual life, which is quite distinct from animal, and is not to be considered in this connection, man and brute have essentially one nature. It is the merit of the Hindu view of creation that it recognizes this fact. It acknowledges and adores the one Being in all creatures. "Such art thou," it bids men remember in the contemplation of every animal. Man represents all animals in his composition, and every animal has something of man in its make. This is the Hindu view of

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* vide *Ofen*, ⁴ * *Animals are man de*

x But conf. *Etel's Lectures on Buddhism*, 257

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creation as opposed to the Hebrew, and this, I think, is the Christian view sufficiently indicated by that saying of Jesus, "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father." The animal kingdom is not separated from us by a gulf which places them beyond our sympathy and fellow-feeling. So far as we are animals they are fellows with us, children of one Father, partakers of one life.

It follows from this view that brutes have claims on human sympathy and good-will. We are not at liberty to deal with them as mere chattels and commodities without sensibilities or rights. They have rights which no statute can define and no legislation enforce, but which educated feeling prescribes and enlightened conscience will exact. That well known precept which expresses a refined sense of right exceeding all civil legislation, but so comprehensive, so universally applicable, and so evidently just that it bears the name of the Golden Rule, — to deal with others as we in like conditions would be

dealt with, — embraces the animal world as well as the human in its large provision. The applications of that rule to animals must be left to the conscience of every right-minded person. Yet the civil law in enlightened communities so far interferes in this province as to shield as well as it can the beast of burden from merciless blows. It is often asked if society improves. One proof of the progress of refinement, of the growth of Christian sentiment and its application to real life, is the now so frequent occurrence in Christian lands of societies for prevention of cruelty to animals. Such societies are needless where the Hindu feeling toward animals prevails. There Christian missionaries in their efforts to convert the natives find, it is said, a serious obstacle in the knowledge which the people have of the manner in which brutes are treated by Christians. In those lands there are hospitals for the cure of sick animals instituted, not, as is sometimes the case with us, in the interest of property, but

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in the interest of mercy, not for the sake of the owners, but of the animals. And travellers report, as a common occurrence, that when an individual has experienced unexpected good fortune he manifests his gratitude by purchasing caged birds in the market and letting them fly outside of the walls of the city.* Christendom has yet much to learn from the heathen nations whom it seeks with a laudable and Christian zeal to convert. But the beauty and glory of Christianity is that Christendom can learn and will learn; that it does not shut itself out from the light, but receives it, desires it. Its faith is progressive, its moral is progressive, it knows that whatever is fair and kind and gentle and humane is according to Christ, — is required by his law. That law contains by implication, though it does not specify, all the humanities and all the virtues. And tenderness to animals is one of the humanities and one of the virtues. Christianity

* See an essay by Schopenhauer in the "Parerga und Paralipomena."

does not explicitly enjoin it, neither does it explicitly enjoin abolition of slavery; and slavery has been practised through all these centuries by Christian nations. But Christian sentiment has come to perceive that slavery is cruel and wrong, and, therefore, unchristian. And Christian sentiment will come in due time to perceive that all abuse of animals, all injustice to animals, is unchristian; that not the Hebrew theory of the brute creation which Christendom inherited from Judaism, and which finds expression in those questionable words of Paul, — “Doth God care for oxen?” — but the Hindu theory which teaches sympathy with animals on the ground of fellowship with the brute creation, is most in accordance with the spirit of Christ.

The law of the land endeavors to protect the horse from the cruel treatment of unfeeling and unprincipled masters, who vent their rage on the helpless beast that serves them. And who that has witnessed the too common spectacle of a savage and infu-

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riated driver belaboring with blows and kicks the noble and overburdened animal whose muscles are unequal to the task assigned him has not felt that the master was the greater brute of the two, and has not been tempted to wish that with such measure as he metes to his beast it might be measured to him again? But the law is a very imperfect protector of animals, and beatings of horses is a very small part of the cruelty practised upon them. Some of these cruelties are perpetrated in the name of science. One can pardon much to that most worthy cause, but painful experiments on the animal organism are justifiable only where the point to be determined by such experiments is one of obvious and vital importance in medical and chirurgical art, and where it can be reached in no other way. The practice of vivisection, — dissection of live animals, — sometimes resorted to by naturalists from mere curiosity, has no such apology, and is wanton trifling with the sacredness of life. The illustrious Blumenbach, one of



the greatest of modern naturalists, strongly reprobated the practice. If ever it is resorted to, he said, let it be by special permission in a public council of competent scientific witnesses, as it were a solemn sacrifice to science.* As a general rule, the knowledge which can be obtained only with torture had better be dispensed with.

More reprehensible still are those spectacles in which brutes are worried and killed for the entertainment of a rude and merciless public, such as the cockpit in England, and the bull-fight which forms the Sunday entertainment of the most orthodox of Catholic Christian lands. One can hardly imagine a stronger contrast in its kind, or one more discreditable to Christian civilization, than that between the bull-fights of Christian Spain and the Banyan hospital for maimed animals at Surat in heathen Hindostan.*

Demoralizing in the highest degree are all public spectacles whose interest is pain. All public executions tend more to cor-

* Schopenhauer.

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rupt and subvert the vulgar mind than even the unpunished crime. If there must be capital punishment, let it be administered in the presence only of the necessary officers appointed for that end, and without superfluous suffering; for self-defence alone can justify the supreme penalty.

There is no fault in children which should give the parents greater concern than a disposition to torture animals. Let parents who observe this vice in a child hasten to correct it with all diligence, not by inflicting bodily pain in return, but by bringing all the weight of their influence to bear in the way of appeal to reason and feeling. Let the child be taught that the brute has rights, and that power is to be used for the benefit, not for the injury, of the subject. Let him be taught to enter into the feelings of his victim by putting himself in its place. Teach him to find pleasure in ministering to the wants and promoting the comfort of domestic animals, to delight in their fellowship, to

cultivate their confidence and good-will. Awaken betimes and cherish in him that compassion for all suffering, the want of which is a fatal defect, the abundance of which allies the human with superior natures, and the germ of which is in every breast.

It is one of the imperfections of our mortal state, a painful necessity, which obliges us sometimes to take the life of animals, — of those that harm us, in self-defence, for the harm they do, of others for what they yield of necessary food. This right we have as human beings, as human animals; for all flesh-eating animals prey upon each other, and man by constitution is a flesh-eating animal. We have the right; so far the Hebrew view is correct. But the ground on which the Hebrew based this right I am not prepared to admit. It belongs to us *as animals*, not as superior beings for whose sake alone the animal world was made, and to whom it is unconditionally subject. And the right has its limits, which

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should not be transgressed. The destruction of life must not be needlessly extended or wantonly indulged. The death which necessity obliges us to inflict should be rendered as painless to the victim as the nature of the case will admit. And may we not indulge the hope of a time, in other far distant generations, when the need of destruction for defence and bodily maintenance shall no longer exist, when the discord of predatory nature shall cease, when the new-made earth shall so adjust and reconcile and mutually limit and mutually attract her various kinds, eliminating all that is hostile and hurtful, that each in its appointed and mutually conceded place shall find a sanctuary with none to molest or make it afraid; when the purged and ethereal body shall no longer subsist by slaughter and blood, but find sufficing nutriment in the grains and pulps of earth and the balms of the air, when the hard and hateful condition of life-destroying life shall be commuted for life-preserving care of life; when not

"all nature's discord," as the poet says, but all nature's concord, shall "keep all nature's peace." If the Hebrew prophet in his rapt mood could dream of a time when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard lie down with the kid and the lion eat hay like the ox, and nothing hurt or destroy in all the mountain of God, may not the higher reach of Christian hope report an amen to the blessed vision?

But what is needed for the present is due regard for the natural rights of animals, due sense of the fact that they are not created for man's pleasure and behoof alone, but have, independent of him, their own meaning and place in the universal order; that the God who gave them being, who out of the manifoldness of his creative thought let them pass into life, has not cast them off, but is with them, in them, still. A portion of his Spirit, though unconscious and unreflecting, is theirs. What else but the Spirit of God could guide the crane and the stork across pathless seas to their winter retreats, and

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back again to their summer haunts? What else could reveal to the petrel the coming storm? What but the Spirit of God could so geometrize the wondrous architecture of the spider and the bee, or hang the hill-star's nest in air, or sling the hammock of the tiger-moth, or curve the ramparts of the beaver's fort, and build the myriad "homes without hands" in which fish, bird, and insect make their abode? The Spirit of God is with them as with us,—consciously with us, unconsciously with them. We are not divided but one in his care and love. They have their mansions in the Father's house and we have ours; but the house is one, and the Master and Keeper is one for us and them.

The rights of all creatures are to be respected, but especially of those kinds which man domesticates and subsidizes for his peculiar use. Their nearer contact with the human world creates a claim on our loving-kindness beyond what is due to more foreign and untamed tribes. Respect that claim. "The righteous man,"

says the proverb, "regardeth the life of his beast." Note that word "righteous." The proverb does not say the merciful man, but the righteous, the just. Not mercy only, but justice, is due to the brute. Your horse, your ox, your kine, your dog, are not mere chattels, but sentient souls. They are not your own so proper as to make your will the true and only measure of their lot. Beware of contravening their nature's law, of taxing unduly their nature's strength. Their powers and gifts are a sacred trust. The gift of the horse is his fleetness, but when that gift is strained to excess and put to wager for exorbitant tasks, murderous injustice is done to the beast. They have their rights, which every right-minded owner will respect. We owe them in return for the service they yield, all needful comfort, kind usage, rest in old age, and an easy death.

And let us take to ourselves the moral lessons which these creatures preach to all who have studied and learned to love

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what I venture to call the moral in brutes. Look at that faithful servant, the ox! What an emblem in all generations of patient, plodding, meek endurance and serviceable toil! Of the horse and the dog what countless anecdotes declare the generous loyalty, the tireless zeal, the inalienable love! No human devotion has ever surpassed the recorded examples of brutes in that line. The story is told of an Arab horse who, when his master was taken captive and bound hand and foot, sought him out in the dark amidst other victims, seized him by the girdle with his teeth, ran with him all night at the top of his speed, conveyed him to his home, and then, exhausted with the effort, fell down and died. Did ever man evince more devoted affection?

Surely, something of a moral nature is present also in the brute creation. If nowhere else, we may find it in the brute mother's care for her young. Through universal nature throbs the divine pulse of the universal Love, and binds all being

to the Father-heart of the author and lover of all. Therefore is sympathy with animated nature a holy affection, an extended humanity, a projection of the human heart by which we live, beyond the precincts of the human house, into all the wards of the many-created city of God, as he with his wisdom and love is copresent to all. Sympathy with nature is a part of the good man's religion. For nature is not godless as false religion has sometimes taught, nor does Christian piety recall men from nature into holy seclusion, with the feeling of that monk who shut out the view of the beautiful landscape, as God-displeasing, from his cell, but rather allies men with it in holy communion. They who have had most of the spirit of Christ have loved to converse with nature, like St. Francis of Assisi, who called the sun and moon and fire and death his brothers and sisters, and whose celebrated hymn to nature needs only a recognition of the brute creation to make it the best

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expression of Christian piety in communion with the visible world.

Here is the hymn, or so much of it as concerns us in this connection :—

“Praised be my Lord God with all his creatures; and especially our brother the Sun, who brings us the day and who brings us the light; fair is he and shining with a very great splendor. O Lord, he signifies to us thee !

“Praised be my Lord for our sister the Moon, and for the stars, the which he has set clear and lovely in the heavens.

“Praised be my Lord for our brother the Wind, and for air and cloud, calms and all weather, by the which thou upholdest in life all creatures.

“Praised be my Lord for our sister Water, who is very serviceable unto us and precious and clean.

“Praised be my Lord for our brother Fire, through whom thou givest us light in the darkness, and he is bright and pleasant and very mighty and strong.

“Praised be my Lord for our mother the Earth, the which doth sustain and keep us and bringeth forth divers fruits and flowers of many colors and grass.”

Here let us add this supplemental stanza :—

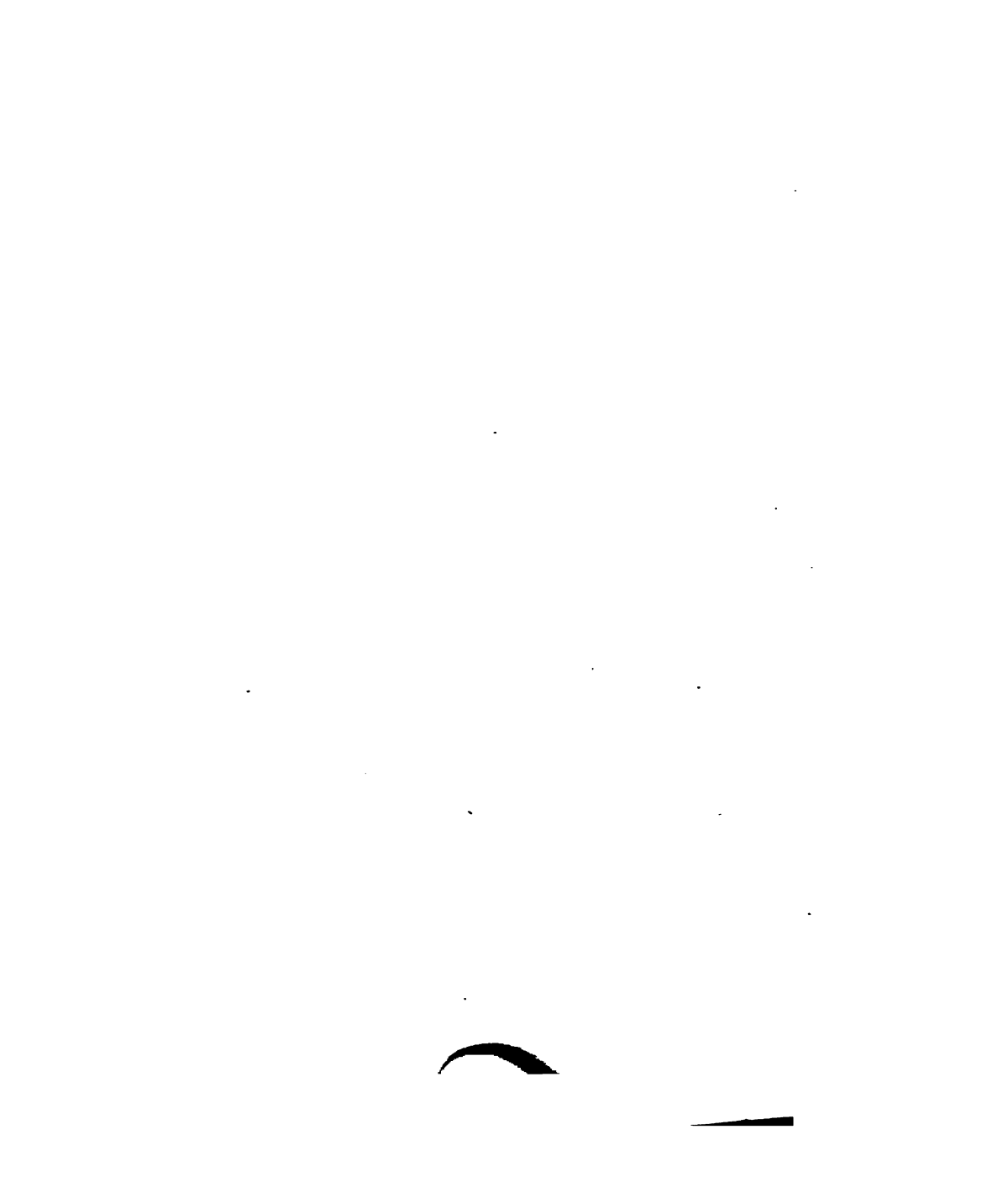
Praised be my Lord for our brothers
and sisters the living creatures which thou
hast made, the birds of the air, the beasts
of the field, and the fishes that inhabit the
sea. They, too, are thy children, they
praise thy handiwork, and thou blessest
them with thy love!

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"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he saith unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day that ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband, and he did eat and the eyes of them both were opened." — GENESIS iii. 1-7.

ONE of the first questions that came to be discussed in the infancy of thought, when men began to speculate on things human and divine, was the origin of evil; more specifically, of moral evil. Atten-

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tion was early drawn to that schism in man's nature which arrays the passions against the moral sense, — the conflict of duty with desire.

The parable of the forbidden tree embodies the result of Hebrew speculation on this subject. No parable of ancient or modern time has exercised such influence as this on the thoughts and belief of mankind, and probably none has suffered such perversion in the interpretation of its import.

The first mistake that was made about it was to interpret literally, as historic fact, what the writer intended as allegory. It is very common, this confusing of allegory with history in religion. Where the form is historical it is natural to suppose that the substance is equally so. Children, until otherwise taught, receive the fictions of fable and romance as veritable fact. Experience corrects this illusion in the case of secular literature. But the literature of religion is represented as exceptional. It comes to us, or we come to it,

with early impressions of literal historic truth which retain their hold in after years, confirmed as they are by traditional views which seem to exclude the idea of fiction as incompatible with the sacred lore. As if history were more sacred than thought!

Another mistake in the interpretation of this parable respects the meaning of the serpent which plays so important a part in the story, seducing man from his rightful allegiance. This figure has been understood to represent the evil Principle in nature, the aboriginal eternal Evil, elsewhere personified as Satan or the Devil. The serpent in this case, I am persuaded, means no such thing. The supposition conflicts with the whole tenor of the Book of Genesis, with all the ideas and views of God and creation there presented. God is there figured as sole Creator, Maker of heaven and earth and all that therein is. Nothing is supposed to exist which God did not create; and all his creatures are pronounced good. The notion of any evil

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thing or person in creation is wholly foreign from the drift of the story and the genius of the book. There is no evidence that the Hebrews at the time of this writing had any conception of a Satan or embodied Principle of Evil. The idea belongs to a later age. It did not originate with the Hebrews, but came to them from a foreign source, and was not adopted among their ideas until centuries after the time of Moses. How has it happened, then, that the serpent in this story has been identified with satanic agency? The misunderstanding is due, I suppose, to certain passages in the Book of Revelation, which speak of the "old serpent or Dragon which is called the Devil and Satan." But in these passages there is no proof of any reference to the story of the temptation in the Garden of Eden, and if there were it would not follow that the author of that story had any such idea in his mind. With English readers this false impression has derived an added sanction from the great authority of Milton, who

embodies it in his "Paradise Lost." That immortal poem has served to shape and fix the received idea of the Fall of Man. Milton, like so many others, has mixed up the later Jewish conception of Lucifer, the fallen angel, the arch-fiend of mankind, with the primitive Hebrew intuition of evil and the fall. It suited his purpose to do so. Now it is very essential to a right understanding of the parable that we divest ourselves of all such impressions, of all ideas of satanic agency in this connection. The very point of the Biblical theory of the fall is lost by regarding it as resulting from the action of an antecedent, extra human, evil Power, instead of originating in the constitution of man. It belongs to the essence of the story that man falls by the action, the perverted action of his own nature. The serpent represents the sensuous understanding divorced from reason and conscience, insinuating itself between the idea of good and the idea of right, separating enjoyment from duty, and urging the pursuit of

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the former in defiance of the latter. The serpent was an old Egyptian symbol of wisdom. Here it typifies fleshly wisdom as opposed to spiritual, — that subtle, insidious reasoning by which a man deludes himself into the belief that he is doing the best thing, consulting his own interests, when he yields to sinful desire. For no man, unless it be from the impulse of sudden, unreasoning, o'ermastering passion, commits a crime without attempting at the moment to justify it to himself by means of some plea or pretext which shall make it seem plausible. This sophistry of sin is figured in the story as a serpent "more subtle than all the beasts of the field."

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A third error respects the moral condition of man before the fall. The prevailing notion represents it as a state of moral perfection. Theologians have said very extravagant things of the spiritual glories of that first estate. "It is as difficult for us," says Dr. South, "to raise our thoughts and imagination to those intellectual per-

fections that attended our nature in the time of innocence, as it is for a peasant bred up in the obscurities of a cottage to fancy in his mind the unseen splendors of a court; but we may collect the excellency of the understanding then by the glorious remainders of it now, and guess at the stateliness of the building by the magnificence of its ruins. And certainly that must have been very glorious the decays of which are so admirable. An Aristotle was but the rubbish of an Adam, and Athens but the rudiments of paradise." The record knows nothing of all this. There is nothing from which it can be legitimately inferred. The only passage that can be interpreted as furnishing the least support to such a theory of man in paradise is the language used in the first account of the creation of man: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them." But whatever these words may mean,—and as I understand them they mean only that man was cre-

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ated a spiritual being, capable of conscious communion with God, and so partaking of the divine nature ;— whatever the words may mean, they belong to a different and independent record, not that which recounts the story of the fall. For evidently two distinct records are embodied in the Book of Genesis. The second chapter contains an account of the creation of man very different from the first. There we read, “ And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living soul.” And this earth-formed man it is who is placed in the Garden of Eden and encounters the temptation there described. Now we may suppose that the writer in the first chapter is speaking of the spiritual man, and in the second of the animal which that spirit inhabits ; still, I cannot suppose that the whole man thus constituted — a spirit incarnate in a fleshly body and bounded by an animal soul — was conceived by the writer as endowed, nor that primitive

man was, in fact, endowed with that extraordinary superhuman power and glory which theologians have imputed to him. A sufficient and, in my opinion, unanswerable objection to this theological view of man is the difficulty of believing that a being so endowed could have fallen from such a height through the solicitation of any such inducement as the theory supposes, or as earth could present. There must have been a terribly weak spot in a creature whom the serpent could so beguile. A class of mystics, of whom the excellent and spiritually minded William Law is the best English representative, understand the fall of man to be a descent from an angelic state into a bestial one, through a low and sinful desire to taste the sensations of inferior natures,—in the words of Law, by “lusting to enter into a sensibility of the good and evil of the bestial life of this world.” How such a desire could enter the mind of an angelic being they do not explain. It seems to me very much as if one of us should long

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to experience the sensations of a toad or a worm. Such a notion, I doubt, never entered the mind of any sane man. This writer, Law, following in the footsteps of Jacob Boehme, his great predecessor and oracle, supposes the fall of man to commence with the longing for an earthly companion, in consequence of which the one original nature, created male and female, was divided into two distinct sexes. Up to that time everything had been pronounced good. "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good." But now comes something which was not good. "It is not good that the man should be alone." Adam should have been sufficient to himself as God created him, male and female, but he longed for a mate, he was not satisfied to be alone; and God, foreseeing his fall in consequence of this dissatisfaction, saw *also* that it was not good for him to be alone, and created woman, took his Eve out of him, by way of remedial provision, with a view to his final restoration; for the seed of the woman

was to bruise the serpent's head. So reason these mystics. The deep sleep which fell upon Adam they interpret as his inability to satisfy himself any longer with the contemplation of the divine image in which he was formed. "Adam," says Law, "had lost much of his perfection before his Eve was taken out of him, which was done to prevent worse effects of his fall and to prepare a means of his recovery when his fall should become total. 'It is not good that man should be alone'; this shows that Adam had altered his first estate, had brought some beginning of evil into it, had made that not to be good which God saw to be good when he created him. And, therefore, as a lesser evil and to prevent a greater, God divided the first perfect human nature into two parts, a male and a female. It was at first the total humanity in one creature who should in that state of perfection have brought forth his own likeness out of himself in such purity of love and such divine power as he himself was brought forth by God.

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The manner of his own birth from God was the manner that his own offspring should have had a birth from him, all done by the pure power of a divine love." "But Adam turned away his love from the divine image which he should only have loved and desired to propagate out of himself. He gazed upon the outward world and let in an adulterate love into his heart. . . . His first love and divine power had no strength left in it; it was no longer a power of bringing forth a divine birth from himself. This state of inability is that which is called his falling into a deep sleep. And in this sleep God divided this overcome humanity into a male and a female." These mystic theories have a certain fascination, but are capable neither of proof nor of disproof from reason or the record. We can view them only as fine speculations whose sole value consists in the satisfaction they afford to individual minds and the light which individuals think they derive from them on the great topics to which they relate.

One more error in the reading of the parable of the fall — the most prevailing and most pernicious of all the errors concerning it — demands our notice. I mean the impression that the prohibition to eat of a certain fruit inculcated on the first man is to be understood as an arbitrary command proposed for no reason in the nature of things, but simply as a test of man's fidelity, — a trial of the whole race in the person of one individual; a trial by which, if successfully encountered and endured by that individual, the whole race were to be immortal and forever blest; by which, if he failed, the whole race, in consequence of that failure, would be cursed and doomed to death. This monstrous interpretation, — which degrades the idea of God into that of an almighty tyrant, and makes the moral law an exercise of power for the sake of power, of domination on the one hand and subjection on the other, — has no shadow of foundation in reason or religion. The story, though commonly so interpreted, means no such thing. It is

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simply a picture of human nature, its tendencies and aberrations, and the natural consequence of those aberrations. The idea of hereditariness I do not find in it. Of inherited guilt, of imputed guilt, there is no intimation. Why, then, is the story told of the first man? Simply because the first man is a type of all men, and being the first is naturally selected as a fitting example of the race. The forbidden tree, the prohibition to eat of it, are symbolic representations of the conscience or moral law in man which, prior to transgression, acts as warning, — Thou must not do this, woe betide thee if thou do this, — and which, after transgression, becomes knowledge of good and evil. This experience the parable terms death or a source of death, — “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Not physical death, as theologians have strangely interpreted the saying, — for Adam lived to what we should consider a good old age, and doubtless was willing enough to die, and thought it no penalty, when his time came; not phys-

ical death, but the death of innocence and peace and self-content, which follows the violation of conscience in every criminal act.

At the same time, inconsistent though it seem, and utterly at variance as it is with the popular and ecclesiastical view of the fall, this very death is a means and moment of progressive life, a step forward in man's development and destiny. It is so represented in the allegory. "And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." Herein is a marvellous thing, that the first transgression, the fall from childish innocence, should bring man nearer to God. And yet, if we consider it, the reason is obvious and the fact is in perfect accordance with the saying of Christ, "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance." Sin is the condition of penitence, and penitence is nearer to God than innocence. The relation to God of

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innocence is the sense of divine rule and protection. The relation to God of penitence is craving and aspiration, a laying hold of God with thought and desire, presaging a closer, more assured and abiding union, because a voluntary, not an accidental one. The returned Prodigal in the parable was nearer to his father than the elder son who had never left him.

This, however, is not the precise meaning of the words I have cited. The likeness to God is there placed on the ground of the knowledge of good and evil,—“He is become like one of us, to know good and evil.” By this I understand the awakening of self-consciousness. Previous to this crisis in his being, man had lived as in a dream. Earth and sky and all the beauty that is in them had been that dream, a part of himself. Himself he saw not. The passive subject of a higher influence, he had followed a given direction. The tree of knowledge opens a new life. He has now become a self-conscious, self-determining being; he has taken his destiny into his

own hands : he will seek satisfaction in his own way. He may think to find it by putting forth his hand to take of the tree of life, in the midst of the garden, i. e. by appropriating to himself the good of life without the use of the necessary means, in the vain conceit of living forever, like God, independent of earthly conditions. But this is not the method by which the destination of man is to be accomplished. A life of care and toil has been ordained for him. By the sweat of his face, by difficulties and trials, disappointments and pains, by endless conflict, by manifold experience of good and evil, he is kept in remembrance of the everlasting laws and the everlasting ends, and disciplined and trained for immortality. His existence on the earth is not to be a paradise of ease and delight, but a march and a fight ; his goal of satisfaction and everlasting life is not to be reached by putting forth the hand of desire to the tree in the midst of the garden, but by putting forth the hand of diligence to the God-appointed task. " There-

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fore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken."

The purport of this story theologians have termed the "Fall of Man." The Fall of Man! what a place it has occupied in Christian theology! And yet the phrase is not found in all the Scriptures from which Christians have professed to draw their faith. Paul, in the early days of the Church, brought forward the old parable by way of illustration, contrasting Adam and Christ as types of two different orders of spirit and schemes of life. A misunderstanding of that illustration has lain at the foundation of a false theology which reigns till now,—a theology which makes the act of an individual in the beginning of time the origin of human nature and the prime and efficient cause of all the evil that is in the world.

Now there is something, a fact of human nature, which may properly enough be designated the Fall of Man. But that fact is wholly independent of any first man

and of anything that happened in the olden time,—a fact of human nature not as vitiated by ancestral transgression, but as made and constituted by its author. Man falls from his childish estate of unconscious innocence, falls from the simplicity of primal nature, falls into self-contradiction and sin. This is human nature in its innermost constitution; not a vicious inheritance, but an aboriginal, primordial necessity. We are Adam and Eve. Eden is here to-day in every home into which an infant is born, and the old trial, with like result, repeats itself in every child that comes into the world. Every man is an Adam made in the likeness of God, sinning against that likeness and suffering loss and pain, the unparadising of the heart by sin. Into every child's paradise the serpent comes,—some insidious moral mischief, some noxious exhalation from the smooth abysses of its nature, some sinister thought suggested by occasion, some taint that steals over the soul, tarnishing its morning bloom and de-

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flowering its unconscious innocence. To every being sooner or later there comes a time when the knowledge of good and evil awakes in the soul; and though with that knowledge the first bloom vanishes from the face of creation, and the veil of enchantment is lifted from life, yet is the knowledge and experience of evil a necessary part of man's education, a necessary stage in the progress of the soul to the highest life. We can know good only through evil; only by victory over evil can good be reached. Why it is so passes understanding. The Indian asked Eliot why God did not kill the Devil? Why indeed? Enough to know that, constituted as we are, moral perfection is attainable only through conflict with evil. That conflict! — creation groans with it, "groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Nature proceeds by opposition of force to force, of life to life. All nature is a struggle for existence, antagonism everywhere of creature with creature, of power with power. And so in the moral world "the

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flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh for they are contrary, the one to the other." Unquestionably God might have formed man without fleshly lusts; he might have left out the serpent and the tree of knowledge of good and evil from the garden of life. And suppose it were so. What then? We should have our Eden and should know no sin, no conflict, and no sorrow, and also, we must add, no progress, no hope, no to-morrow. Happy, no doubt, are the Eden days in their freedom from care and pain and their beautiful innocence, but they are not the best. Dearer than all the joys of Eden is the strength acquired by conflict with evil, more precious than childish innocence are the fruits of repentance, and better than never to have sinned is the conscious progress of awakened souls in the steep ascent of the moral life. This is the doctrine enounced by Paul: "I had not known sin but by the law." (Thou shalt not eat thereof.) "The law entered that sin might abound. But

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where sin abounded grace did much more abound, that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Every child is a new Adam and repeats the fall. He is born into a paradise, ignorant of good and evil. That knowledge, so essential to his growth, is the fruit of a forbidden tree. He eats and his eyes are opened. He discovers his naked self and asks, What am I, and wherefore, and whither bound? Then begins all the heavy burden and woe of life. But then, also, begins the discipline which unfolds a better life within. Through many a fall and many a bitter conflict, human nature wins its way to freedom and peace. What was sown in weakness is raised in power, what was sown in tears is raised in joy. The fall which closed the first paradise against us has opened a new Eden in the soul.

So I interpret this wondrous apologue which comes to us from an unknown past, reaching back with its reminiscence to

original man, and forward with its import to the end of time. It is curious how this floating fragment of an ancient wisdom has survived, while the solid fabrics of antiquity have perished and left no trace behind. Generations have come and gone, one millennium after another has glided by, cities rock-walled and million-peopled have arisen and disappeared, empires have flourished and decayed, marble and brass have crumbled into dust, but the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden still breathes the freshness of the world's morning, while it faithfully pictures the life of to-day and foreshadows the future of all generations.

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As the Old Testament begins with the story of a temptation which the natural man encounters and to which he succumbs, so the New begins with a temptation which the spiritual man encounters and overcomes. The last trial is the complement and compensation of the first. The spiritual man is not less human than the

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natural, but more so; Christ is a truer representative of man than Adam, and if in the likeness of Adam all men fall and die, in the likeness of Christ all rise again and live. The Rabbins say that Adam was eighty years debating whether or no he would eat the forbidden fruit which he ate at last. The evangelists relate that Christ in the wilderness achieved in forty days a complete victory over all the power of the enemy. If, then, our theology is troubled with the result of the first temptation, it may solace itself with the issues of the second, by which the original decision of human nature is reconsidered and reversed. The virtue is as real and influential as the sin, the triumph as broad as the fall.

VI.

• CAIN,

OR

PROPERTY AND STRIFE AS AGENTS IN
CIVILIZATION.

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CAIN.

“And Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass that when they were in the field Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him.” — GENESIS IV. 9.

“PROPERTY is theft,” was the saying of the French socialist.* Property is violence, says the testimony of Hebrew tradition. This first and necessary step in civilization, involving a conflict of wills and rights, was not to be taken without opposition and deadly strife. The story of Cain represents that first step, represents the beginning of civil society, as the story of Adam in Eden represents a state antecedent to civil life.

What the facts precisely were that gave rise to this story it is impossible to say. These dark traditions of a prehistoric age

* “La Propriété c’est le vol.” — PROUDHON.

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are not to be received as exact report, but as mythical investment of historic fact. In the absence of written chronicles, when past events live only in the memory, and are handed down by verbal transmission from generation to generation, it is only the more salient points and the prominent names that tradition retains. An imaginary case may illustrate this law. Suppose there were no written history of our late civil war, and no contemporary documents from which to compile one. Suppose the art of writing were unknown and the whole transaction committed to the keeping of tradition, that is, to the memory of successive generations. What aspect would the facts be likely to assume in some distant age, say, after the lapse of a thousand years? Most probably that of a personal contest between Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, resulting in the death of the former. The causes of the contest, the rights of the case, would be variously conceived and represented by descendants of the different parties, or

rather by the different streams of tradition originating with them, and embodying different views of the question. One would represent it as an act of aggression perpetrated by Lincoln with a view to deprive Davis of his slaves, another would describe it as a movement on the part of Davis to overrun the territory of Lincoln and to occupy it with an alien race. Such we may imagine would be the fragmentary and contradictory notes that might survive of a great historic event, in the absence of written testimony. And such I suppose to be the character and historic import of this ancient fragment of Hebrew tradition. I suppose it to be the sediment and mythical deposit of some historic event, some great convulsion of the early world, of which the names of Cain and Abel have survived as prominent actors, — a fatal encounter between the two parties represented by these names.

This critical event which forms an epoch in human history is here presented in the form of an apologue. Two brothers, the

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first of woman born, dwell side by side in a region bordering on the land of Eden, a region still glowing with the beauty of primal nature and rejoicing in the presence of the Lord. Inclination leads them different ways; they apply themselves each to his chosen pursuit. One pastures his flocks and leads the roving life of a shepherd, the other, more progressive, tills the ground and seeks in the sweat of his face a more varied subsistence than untilled nature even then could supply. The Lord, it is said, favored Abel rather than Cain; the shepherd obtains some advantage over the planter. Immediately the world becomes too narrow for the brothers. Violence ensues, the elder lifts his hand against the younger and slays him. For this he is driven from his native land and finally takes up his abode in Eastern Asia, where he builds a city, and where he and his descendants introduce the arts of civilized life.

Such is the form in which tradition has embodied some of the facts connected

with the first division of the human family. The facts appear to have come to us through a colored medium, — a medium colored in the interest of the shepherd race. We have here one side of the story ; there is another version of it, preserved by some tribe of the Semite stock, in which Abel appears as the aggressor and Cain as the victim.

What is clearly historical is the fact of a rupture between two classes or tribes ; a nomadic and an agricultural people, and the consequent migration of the latter in an eastward direction from the land of their nativity. The story supposes some advance in the arts of life. It is no rude "state of nature" so called, no infant society that is brought to view. Between the period represented by Adam and that represented by Cain and Abel, a long tract of time must be supposed to have intervened. The condition of primitive nature is outgrown ; artificial life has begun. We find man in possession of domestic animals, which he has learned to train and

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make profitable. We find him tilling the ground, consequently in possession of agricultural implements, which, however rude, presuppose skilled labor for their invention. All this implies progress, and progress implies time. Two distinct callings — two at least — have developed themselves, — the shepherd's and the husbandman's. Hence conflicting interests and occasional collisions, — the herdsman claiming unlimited right of pasturage, the planters seeking to reserve and enclose a portion of the land for agricultural use. It is likely that both parties had cause of complaint. On the one hand, the sequestration of what had thitherto been common would seem an invasion of his natural rights to the herdsman; and, on the other, the damage done to his plantations by grazing herds must have been an intolerable nuisance to the planter. Both are represented as addicted to the worship of Jehovah. "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord, and Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of

his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering, but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect." Here we have evidently the speculation of some narrator who has colored the tradition with his own conceit. To suppose that God is better pleased with the offering of slaughtered lambs than of fresh fruits is a monstrous misconception of the Godhead. It was some reflected idea of atoning blood, as constituting the value of sacrifice, which gave this color to the story.

I cannot believe divine preference, or envy of divine preference, as the narrative alleges, to have been the true cause of the rupture between the shepherds and the husbandmen. Whatever the cause (most likely a question of property, a disputed title), the rupture issued in open violence. There is fighting and killing; the shepherds are routed and slain. But violence fails to secure for the victor the peaceable possession of the ground. Immediately he migrates in search of new settlements,

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and seeks elsewhere the peace and prosperity denied him in his former home. His emigration consummates the division of the human family.

After this, in the Biblical story, there are two races, represented respectively by the progeny of Cain and that of Abel (or Seth *), the former energetic, industrious, progressive, covering the face of the earth with the fruits of their labor; the other God-fearing and religious, but apparently inactive and stationary. In the course of time the two races unite. "The sons of God took unto themselves wives from among the daughters of men." The fruit of this union was a generation of men distinguished by their prowess and might. "Giants" they are called in the Scripture, "men of renown in the olden time." † But, on the whole, the union serves rather to quicken and extend the bad than to

* Seth is the name of a god, and Enos, his son, means man. Accordingly, the genealogy in Genesis v. begins properly with Cainan (Cain), Enos being one with Adam, and Seth the Creator.

† See Genesis vi. 4.

nourish and diffuse the good. The corruptions of a selfish and material civilization act with fatal effect on society, sapping the foundations of social life. General depravity ensues; "all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth." Then the great catastrophe of the Deluge closes for that portion of earth the Biblical drama of the early world.

The point of chief interest in this tradition is the illustration it presents of the function of property, and that of war, in the civil and moral education of man.

I assume that the real cause of dissension between the two parties was a question of property, a disputed title to lands reserved for agricultural use. Property begins with agriculture. The very word Cain, etymologically interpreted, tells the story. Cain means possession; and Cain is the first tiller of the ground. The cultivation of the land requires fixtures and a right of ownership in the soil. The first attempt to enforce this right gives rise to dissension and strife. It restricts

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the freedom of pasturage, it avenges the incursion of grazing herds. Cain, the possessor, is the first murderer. But he is also the first civilizer; he builds the first city; he is father of the first artificers in brass and iron. To him and his progeny the cause of productive industry,—whatever concerns the material well-being of society, all the embellishment and beauty of life, is assigned. All this results from the institution of property, and may trace its genealogy to Cain. Social morality acknowledges the same parentage. It was property—the idea of ownership—that first developed the sense of right, on which all morality is founded. And not only so, but most of the duties of social life, and most of the topics and occasions of moral effort and moral growth, which society, as now constituted, furnishes, are directly or indirectly connected with property. A large part of the moral education, or means of education, which society possesses, as now constituted, would be wanting if the right of private accumu-

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{ lation and private possession were done away.

In the order of Providence our virtues and our vices are near neighbors, have their roots intermixed, — nay, sometimes spring from the same root; as in nature foul and fair have one parentage. The compost with which you enrich your garden contains the germs of the weeds that infest it. The brilliant flame which lights your dwelling, turning night into day, is a fetid vapor, an offence that poisons the air, a mischief that threatens destruction, when, by any abnormal vent, it escapes its prison-house. If property in one operation is jealousy and wrath and violence and fratricide, in another it is order and justice and progress and beauty and mercy, — a minister of moral and spiritual life. Man has a natural right to the products of his labor, and unless that right had been maintained, — when necessary, maintained by force, — society would never have advanced beyond its original savage state. Social progress is possible only by

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assiduous industry, and industry requires a motive power which, as man now is, the lust and the hope of private gain alone can supply. All attempts to dispense with property, all social enterprises based on community of goods, have been found, and will ever be found, to take more from human weal on the whole than they give in return.

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Nevertheless, in all such attempts there is a truth and a principle which craves recognition and behooves to be adopted in practice. Namely, this: that the rich man owes a debt to society, by whose consent and aid alone it is possible for him to accumulate wealth, or inherit wealth; that he is bound to render as he has received, to give a proportionate part of his havings, whether earned or inherited; not only in the way of tax to town and State, but in voluntary contribution to social needs, to the aid and relief of the poor and distressed. I say a proportionate part, — the rich especially a proportionate part. The rich man has no right

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to the sole and exclusive use of his wealth. It is not his own "so proper" as to justify his spending it all in selfish gratifications. He owes it to society, and though it is a debt whose payment cannot be enforced by legal process, the time will come when that debt shall be reckoned a debt of honor, and when not to pay it will be regarded as disgraceful as it is not to pay any other just debt which the debtor has the means of discharging. The time will come when the rich man who refuses to contribute his proportionate share to the public weal shall suffer social degradation, as already he stands degraded in his own consciousness, when he judges himself by the moral law, and compares his deeds and his goods, the benefactions bestowed with the benefits received from his kind.

In the story of Cain it is shown that the right of property is established by force. That first step in civilization was achieved by conflict, and every succeeding step of deep and lasting import has been achieved in the same way. It is the

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*It is not written in any of the
 scriptures that the right of property
 was established by force. It is the
 foundation of civilization. It is the
 basis of all the arts and sciences.
 It is the basis of all the laws and
 customs of the world.*

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method of history. If we cast but a glance along the tide of time we shall see that the one universal condition, if not the prime agent, of civil progress has been war. Not a step has society advanced which has not been contested with arms and purchased with blood. The civil and religious liberty we hold so dear, the right of private judgment, the right of self-government, the establishment of every important principle in civil legislation,—with what conflicts and fightings and bloodshed these blessings have been secured! Periods of peace in the history of nations have been but armistices, brief temporary breathing spaces interposed in the stated, normal, secular war which began with Cain, and has raged in our day with unabated violence. Society advances from conflict to conflict. So it has been hitherto, and so it will be till the animal in man succumbs to the spiritual. It is the animal in man whence wars and fightings come, and though war has been a minister of progress, of spiritual progress

X Force and Right rule the world;
Force, till Right is ready — to subvert.

as well as material, it is, nevertheless, in its proper nature carnal and devilish. The fruit of the spirit is peace. War has been said to be a conflict of ideas. Say, rather, it is a conflict of interests with ideas, or with other interests. Passions war, ideas never. Pure spirit is incapable of passion, it can will no evil, but only good. Its end is blessing and its method love. If ever spirit gains the ascendancy in human nature, acts of violence will become an impossibility, and war in all its kinds obsolete.

That spirit, though never supreme, has never been wanting in human kind. The fiercest times have been flavored by it, the rudest tribes have felt its power. A principle of life imparted to the world with its first human occupants, it has ever been at work, informing, transforming, gradually subduing the world to itself. The process is as sure as any process in nature. As sure, though it may be as slow as that which shaped the solid earth by long accretion from the fiery deep. Both process-

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5 But moral and spiritual progress is in common with physical progress, as man necessarily advances toward a higher and better life, so no race is stationary.

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es have one Author, both are births of one creative Word, both agencies of one almighty Power. As earthly nature duly pursues her appointed course, arrives in due order to her destined growths, and perfects in time her several kinds, so the spirit, or heavenly nature, proceeds evermore in its fixed intent, and moves and grows in all its organs, until it shall fill its foreordained sphere and mature at last its consummate fruit.

VII.

NINE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINE YEARS?



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*Nine Hundred
and Sixty-nine
Years?*

NINE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-
NINE YEARS ?

“ And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty and nine years.” — GENESIS v. 27.

THE dates which Hebrew tradition assigns to the lives of men before the flood present a problem that much perplexes the Biblical critic. That the life of a human individual could ever have attained the age of nine hundred years and upwards reason finds altogether incredible. On the other hand, that the figures are mere inventions, that they represent nothing but a freak of the narrator, is almost equally incredible. Nor is it at all likely that these dates are accidental corruptions of primeval tradition. For where, in the absence of written documents, oral tradition is charged with the keeping and transmitting of past events,

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it is apt to be faithful to its trust and especially tenacious of numbers. Moreover, the numbers here are too particular and too sharply defined to favor the supposition of accidental corruption. Accidental corruption in such matters is a relaxation of memory, and memory relieves itself, not by invention, but by the substitution of round numbers for those which are more exact.

That is a poor faith which contents itself with thoughtlessly receiving, and that is equally poor criticism which contents itself with thoughtless denial. The figures mean something, but precisely what they mean is matter of doubtful conjecture. The most plausible hypothesis is that they designate epochs of history marked by certain predominant names,* or else that they measure the prevalence of certain genealogical types which naturally enough bear the name of their typical representatives; in other words, that they represent

* See Bunsen's "Bibelwerk," 9^{ter} Halbband, for an explanation of the patriarchal genealogies.

+ { the duration of families instead of individuals. We know the proneness of the Hebrew people to give to individual names a collective signification, i. e. to speak of a tribe or a nation as an individual. "Benjamin," they say, did this and that, when they mean the whole tribe of which Benjamin was the head. "Israel," they say, when they mean the Israelitish nation. Remembering this, I find it not unlikely that the names of Cainan and Mahaleel and Jared and Methuselah are used collectively, — used to denote tribes and epochs as well as individuals.

Those readers of the Bible and those commentators who think that the cause of religion is concerned in the literal understanding of the text, reject, of course, such interpretations and insist on the commonly received term of patriarchal life. One writer, even, gravely suggests that the wickedness of man before the flood may be explained by the patriarchs having so much time on their hands. These people contend that the human frame, though

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long since incapable of half or a quarter part of the wear ascribed to Methuselah, may nevertheless have had that persistency then, when the earth was young and the habits of life so simple, and deleterious uses so few, as must be supposed to have fallen to the lot of the antediluvian world. But this supposed simplicity of habit is a pure assumption, unauthorized by any indications in the record, and inconsistent with the crowded life which such longevity must needs engender. It conflicts with a state of society in which "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually." And as to the newness of the earth in those ages, it does not appear that new countries are especially favorable to length of life, but rather the reverse. The atmospheric influences of lands lately opened to human occupancy are quite as likely to be prejudicial to health as those of older and long-peopled climes. The only circumstance in the life of the antediluvians which would seem to be peculiarly con-

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ducive to longevity was the absence of those entailed diseases which enter so largely into the heirloom of later time. The human organism must then have been free from hereditary taint. No sickly tendencies descending from sire to son, and gaining strength with each generation, had corrupted the blood. Man in our day is the victim of long-descended infirmities. Scarce any are born sound; the major part come into life already infected with bodily ails, or predisposed to one or another disease. Palsy, fever, consumption, are old inhabitants of every civilized land and have hereditary rights which are our hereditary wrongs. The disorders which prey upon human life and shorten the term of earthly years are not so much the result of personal imprudence or exposure as they are of hereditary predisposition. It is not altogether the food we use, the climate we inhabit, the life we lead, which makes us what we are in our bodily estate, but what we inherit from our progenitors and their progenitors

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through many generations. In each generation are concentrated the sickly tendencies of each preceding. Whatever is evil in our physical condition is the product of ancestral influences acting through immemorial time. From all this the earlier inhabitants of the earth were exempt. Their bodies were free of the mortmain of former generations. The uncorrupted juices of primal nature coursed through their veins. They had only their own imprudences, not those of a distant ancestry, to expiate. To this immunity we may reasonably ascribe a term of life far exceeding the present, but it does not explain these patriarchal dates. The freshness of primal nature does not explain a life of a thousand years.

Physiology objects that the life of the human organism is not, under any supposable conditions, capable of such duration. The possible term of human life, under influences the most favorable, is supposed by one physiologist* — the on-

* Haller.

x See Contra, Herbert Spencer
— "Evolution of Evil" — also
"Increase of Human Life" by Dr. Jannis
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ly one, I believe, who allows it that capacity — to reach the length of nearly two hundred years. To suppose it prolonged to nearly five times that amount implies one of two things, — an organization so different from that which we understand by the human as to put the beings to whom it is ascribed beyond the pale of humanity, and thus to sever our connection with the antediluvian world, or else a continuous miracle wrought for the preservation of the lives so prolonged. On the latter supposition, the question is between the probability of such a miracle and the probability of a misunderstanding of the record which seems to affirm this length of years.

Moreover, it should be noticed in this connection that the record itself represents Jehovah as saying, before the flood, that “the days” of man “shall be a hundred and twenty years.” “My spirit shall not always remain in man” (not “strive with man,” as our version has it) “for he is flesh and his days shall be a hundred and twenty years.” If, therefore, we understand

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literally the nine hundred and sixty-nine years of Methuselah and the nine hundred and fifty of Noah, we bring the record into conflict with itself.

But let us for an instant admit the vulgar interpretation of these dates and endeavor to represent to ourselves a life of nine hundred and sixty-nine years. I fancy that those who acquiesce so readily in this idea have no very clear conception of its import. To make the supposition plain let us bring it home to our own time. Suppose an individual of the age of nine hundred and sixty-nine years to be living at this moment. See what a reach of history his experience takes in. He was born, we will say, in England, in the year 900, in the very centre and midnight of what are called the Dark Ages. Six centuries had piled their weight upon his head when Columbus discovered America, and when Luther confronted Empire and Church at the diet of Worms. He recalls the shudder which went through Christendom when, at the close of the

tenth century, it was commonly believed that the end of the world was at hand. He kept the run of the Crusades, from the mad expedition of Peter the Hermit to the death of Louis IX. He was older than any one now living on this earth when William the Norman, at the head of his barons, invaded England and wrested the kingdom from the Saxons. He remembers the days of Edgar and St. Dunstan; he can almost remember Alfred, whose reign had not yet expired when he was born.

Now the annals of the antediluvian world may not have presented a record so eventful as the last thousand years of European history. But those ages were by no means a blank on the scroll of time. Wherever men are congregated, there is history, — commerce and arts, revolutions and disturbances, expeditions, wars, the rise and fall of dynasties and nations. Imagine the mental condition of a man whose experience embraces a millennium of history ! The burden of such a past I conceive would be

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greater than the human intellect could bear. The brain would sink beneath the load; would collapse into idiocy or explode in madness. Or, if the brain did not give way, the mind preoccupied with the multitude of its memories, haunted by the thronging images of so many centuries, would become the captive of its own experience. Imprisoned in the past, it would lose its hold on the present, would lose its interest in the things of to-day; and the life so prolonged would become a burden to itself and the world. Even within the limits of life as now bounded by the fourscore years of extreme duration the octogenarian loses the capacity of progress, not so much by the failure of the understanding as by the pressure of the past preoccupying the mind and indisposing it to fresh acquisition.

It might be furthermore objected to the literal understanding of these dates, that if the lives to which they are assigned were not exceptional,—and I know of no reason for supposing them to have been so,—

if nine hundred years was the ordinary date of human existence in those days, and if the race was then as prolific as now, and wide-spread death by war and pestilence no more frequent than now, the earth's population must have greatly outgrown the capacity of the then known world to support.

But not to insist on this obvious view, I find a stronger objection in the insupportableness, not to say inconceivableness, of such a life. The material difficulties are great, but the moral difficulties are greater. I repeat that a life so protracted would be an intolerable burden. The pleasure to be derived from our connection with this world — the satisfaction which even the most happily endowed can find in it — is limited, and when that limit is reached the connection becomes an evil and a pain. So long as one is capable of learning and producing, though the heart have lost its freshness and the world its gloss, some relish of life will remain. But the mind's capacity of learning and

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producing, in a mortal body, is bounded, and there comes a time when the strongest mind can no longer take in new ideas, by reason, as I have said, of the pressure of the past and the preoccupation of the ground by tyrannous experience. The tablets are full, there is no more room for new entries. And because the mind can no longer take in, it can no longer give forth; the influx and reflux, the tidal play of the intellect is stopped, and the individual is so far dead, though sense and bodily health remain. There comes a time when the mind outgrows this present world, i. e. outgrows its connection with it; not because it has appropriated all that is in it and learned the uttermost it has to teach, but because it has learned all and appropriated all that its own capacity allows. For, though the mind may be infinitely progressive, the organ by which it works is not. If eternal progress is the law of the one, evolution within given limits — growth, maturity, decay — is the law of the other. Sup-

pose, in a subject of Methuselah's age, the beginning of decay to be long postponed; give the organization a century to grow in, and, putting decline out of view, suppose it to remain for centuries stationary at its highest culminating point; how would a stationary organization suit a spirit capable of infinite progress and conscious of that capacity? Imagine the organ as perfect as human conditions will admit, you cannot have it so perfect as to be entirely plastic and obedient to the soul. It cannot accommodate itself to an ever-growing spiritual life; it must come in time to be a hindrance and a prison to the spirit that will on and refuses to accept an earthly goal. There comes a time when the heart, too, as well as the mind, outgrows this present world, is sated with its uses, distastes its gifts, and sends the thought of its longing beyond the bounds of time. It is true, that, as life is now constituted, the aged, while bodily health and a certain degree of faculty remain, are contented to live and linger on in slow

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decay. But that contentment, I fancy, is sustained by the knowledge that the end is near, and perhaps by the forefeeling of immortality, by a glimpse of the dawn of the great Beyond,—“the morning twilight of a sun that shines not here on things below.” But if it were told to the man of ninety that the end is not yet, that centuries more must elapse before that dawn shall deepen into day, I doubt he would not rejoice in the tidings. For though the vigor of manhood should remain, though the ninety years should retain the strength and faculty of forty, he would feel that those ninety years had given him all that this life can yield, that new conditions were needed to unfold the deeper lying powers and to quicken and perfect the inner life. A healthy nature rejoices in life, and in moments when instinct is stronger than reason, may wish it protracted beyond the ordinary term of mortal years. The English humorist expresses a common feeling when confessing an “intolerable disinclination to dy-

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x Charles Lamb

ing." "I am not content to pass away 'like a weaver's shuttle.' These metaphors solace me not, nor sweeten the unpalatable draught of mortality. . . . I am in love with this green earth,—the face of town and country; the unspeakable rural solitudes and the sweet security of streets. I would set up my tabernacle here. I am content to stand still at the age to which I am arrived,—I and my friends." It is the natural feeling of a man in the prime of life to wish to stand still,—“I and my friends,”—to stand still with them and grow no older. But unfortunately, or fortunately, life will not stand still; we cannot live without growing older; and age, if it does not bring decay, will bring bitter experience and will bring satiety. Life is sweet, even this earth-life, could we have it on our own terms. But this is impossible; we soon learn that it is impossible. We must take life, not as we fancy it might be, but as it is. We must take it with conditions which we cannot essentially alter. One

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of those conditions is the close limitation of human faculty and action by inevitable laws. The mind is subject to the law of the body, and "that law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth." By his bodily organization man is a part of universal nature. He must take his place among terrestrial kinds; he can only fulfil, and no more than fulfil, the circle prescribed for him by adamantine necessity. No man can unite in his single self the excellences of all the excellent; and when we compare the actual achievements of the greatest with what we imagine of superior beings, we soon see an end of all perfection. Could you question the heroes of old and of recent time, the captains and the statesmen, the sages and the poets, they would tell you that the uttermost they *did* was small compared with what they felt themselves to *be*, in the undeveloped resources of their nature. They were great and good, but not so great or good as their conception and our conception. When we think of this, how far our

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x "Why callst thou me good?"

best works fall short of our conception and the undeveloped force that is in us, how limited our faculty, how little our action, — when we think of this, the idea of a lengthened life loses much of its charm. However rich and full this earth-life, it is not the best that may be. We can imagine something better, and we crave that better, a wider scope, a freer activity, a more adequate representation of ourselves in our deeds.

Another condition which we have to take with our given term of life, be it longer or shorter, is the mutability of earthly things, the transitoriness of earthly good, the disappointment of cherished hopes, the loss of our beloved, the severing of the heartstrings that bleed where they break, and never quite heal; the chronic tantalization, the slipping away of life from under us, the perpetual loosening of our hold on things. Who has not had experience of these sorrows? and who would wish such experience unduly prolonged? But such is life, and cannot well

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be other in this world of our converse. These experiences teach us, if we are willing to be taught, that it is not well to live always in this world, nor to live much longer than the fourscore years of Biblical allowance.

This conviction is finely expressed in the well-known fable of the "Wandering Jew," the man who with curses bade Jesus march on and not stop, when, weary and faint, on his way to the cross, he had sunk to the ground, and on whom, in return for this cruelty, Jesus, it is said, pronounced the sentence "Thou shalt wander till I return." And ever since then, according to the fable, Ahasuerus walks the earth and can find no grave. Many poets and writers of fiction have handled this theme; and a very tempting one it is. They have treated it very differently, with more or less skill, but all agree in picturing the weariness and anguish of such a life,—a life which, with no external calamity, is made by its mere duration an immortal torment.

If, then, we fairly envisage the idea of a life of nine hundred years, if we picture to ourselves the intolerable burden of such a life, we can hardly believe that the men of the antediluvian world were cursed with that load. And the more we ponder this idea the more clearly we shall see the falsity of the old theological view that represents death—the death of the body—as a curse which man drew down upon himself by his disobedience. Not a curse, but a blessing, without which life itself would be a curse. Of all the angels that wait around the Throne and do the bidding of eternal Love, there is none whose ministry is more indispensable than that of the angel of death. Whatever sorrows may attend the timing, the method, and incidents of that ministration, the end is sure and supreme blessing.

In the order of nature every day of earthly existence is rounded with a sleep by which the soul dies into new and replenished life. If that sleep, which is temporary death, be long withheld, insan-

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ity ensues. The mind cannot bear the strain of a too protracted waking. And by the same order the great day of mortality must have its crowning sleep of proportionate duration. If that crowning sleep were too long deferred, the interminable day would be a burden and a curse.

And why, it may be asked, if death is a necessity for this world's use, why not also for the use of the next? If the earthly life must be shortened to meet the requirements of finite nature, how, hereafter, shall finite nature bear the burden of immortality? I suppose that hereafter, also, there may be the need, from time to time, of "a sleep and a forgetting," as the ages accumulate their experience on the soul. Immortality may be a series of births instead of one continuous living. Successive deaths may be the risers of those "altar-stairs that slope through darkness up to God"; each stair a new day of spiritual life, a higher capacity of serviceable action, a nearer revelation of the infinite Love.

But all this is hidden behind the earth,
among the mysteries of the unknown land
whose day cannot dawn till earth's de-
clines. We only know that the "undiscovered
country" must be reached, if at all,
through the night of death. And will we
not welcome, when it comes, the silent
guide to the "silent land" ?

"O Land! O Land!

For all the broken-hearted

The mildest herald by our fate allotted

Beckons, and with inverted torch doth stand

To lead us with a gentle hand

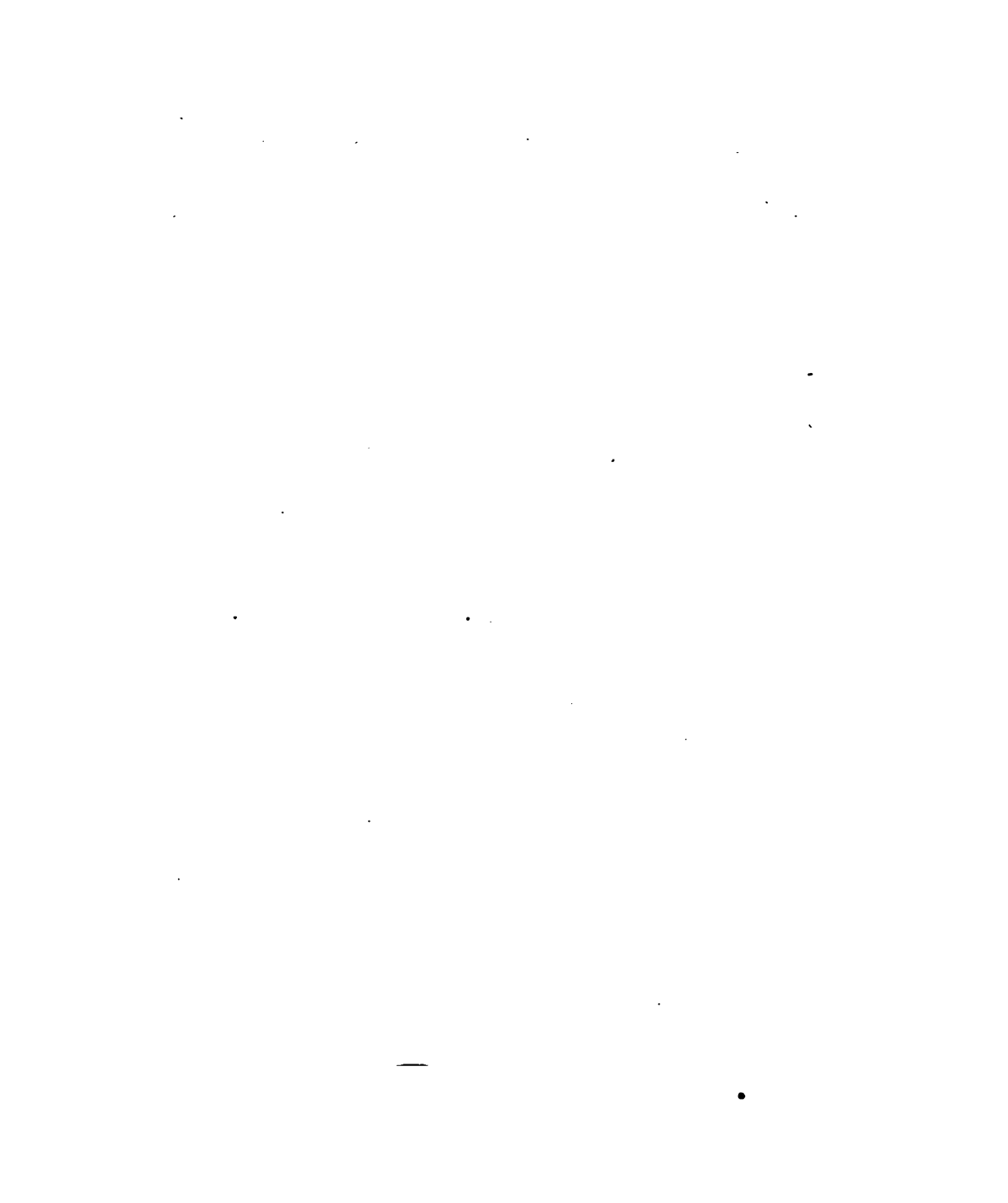
Into the land of the great departed,

Into the silent land!"

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(Sailor)



VIII.

THE FAILURE OF PRIMEVAL SOCIETY.

CHAP. VIII.

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SOCIETY.

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."—
GENESIS vi. 5.

WHETHER historic or merely conjectural, this statement agrees with the rational view of primitive man. The depravity ascribed to the early world is nothing more than might be expected as the natural issue and probable result of the first experiment of social life. Reasoning from the nature of man, we should say that society in its first state, committed to undisciplined instincts and native passion, without education, without experience, without ideals, with no authority but brute force, would prove a failure, would suffer wreck for want of moral resources

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with which to stem the corruptions of vice and the anarchy which vice engenders. The ancients believed that man's first estate was a golden age of innocence and peace. Their poets have so represented it, and perhaps the story of the Garden of Eden had its origin in that propensity to glorify the past, which shaped the Gentile poets' dream. But the facts of antiquity, so far as we know them, point the other way. The earliest indications of man's existence on the earth which science brings to light, contradict the notion of primeval innocence. The fossil remains which recent investigation has discovered in situations revealing human occupancy long antecedent to the oldest historic records, consist, for the most part, of implements of war. Spears and arrow-heads do not betoken a golden age of innocence and peace, but rather an age of wrath and strife. And what archæology makes probable, and what Hebrew tradition affirms, is what our experience of human nature would teach us to expect, — instead of the bless-

ed tranquillity which poets depict, a state of prevailing depravity, a state in which "the wickedness of man was very great."

Is, then, human nature constitutionally depraved, — depraved to that extent that the evil in man exceeds the good? God forbid! The good exceeds, but the bad is soonest developed, and, without the checks of education, of laws, and religion, will outgrow the good and assert a baleful supremacy. It is not a question of human nature in itself considered, but of human nature in social combinations. Such combinations, until the accumulated wisdom of many generations had shaped their constitution for suppression of evil and promotion of good, would furnish abundant provocations to the baser propensities, covetousness, lust, revenge; whilst the virtues would require a long time to develop their activity, and by organized effort to exercise a controlling power. There must be a preponderance of good in man, or society could not exist; for evil tends to dissolution and ruin. But an element of

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evil there is, also, in man, as in every order and realm of being ; and the evil, under certain conditions, may develop itself with such rapidity as to overpower for a time the good ; as weeds in a garden will usurp the ground and choke the nobler plants, if the garden be left to take care of itself. This rapid development of evil would be likely to occur in a primitive state of society, where the moral sense had not yet embodied itself in laws and institutions, and established means of education. The passions in such a community would know no restraints but such as were purely accidental ; violence and lust would reign supreme ; the contagion of evil example would spread corruption, would infect the young, and diffuse an ever-increasing depravity. Every man's hand would be against his neighbor, until society became impossible, through dissolution of all the bonds which bind man to man. Individual examples there would be of unspotted innocence and persevering integrity ; as " Noah was found righteous in his genera-

tion." But these exceptional cases would only contrast, not check, the general corruption. The good would finally be forced to give up the attempt to reform society, would leave society to perish in its sins, and, separating themselves from the rest, would propagate elsewhere a new and better kind.

This theory of primitive man agrees precisely with the Hebrew record, but neither theory nor record supposes an innate depravity of human nature. It only supposes what all experience teaches, that the good in man requires to be developed by education, and requires long time for its development, while the bad without education, like weeds and vermin, hastens to develop itself. We are not, perhaps, sufficiently aware to how great an extent the moral life of society, the good that exists in the average of men, and whose fruits we enjoy in public order, security, and peace;—to how great an extent all this is due to the gradual accumulation of moral forces, educational, literary, civil,

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and religious, operating in a thousand ways to restrain the evil in man and to elevate and purify our daily life. These composite forces, these consenting influences, constitute what may be called the moral capital of society, incomparably more essential to social well-being than all the accumulations of material capital with which the industry of successive generations has enriched our estate. The value of this material capital, consisting in houses and warehouses, ships and wharves, in roads and farms, and mines and engines, arts and mechanical inventions, we can all understand. This complex apparatus of human industry we can all appreciate. We know very well to what a pitiful state we should be reduced if all these accumulations, and even the knowledge of these things, were suddenly destroyed, and man were left with nothing but his native powers and the untamed earth, to begin the world anew. We know what the change would be from the top of material civilization to the lowest plane of savage life. But sup-

pose these material possessions were left to us, and that moral and religious ideas, traditions, and beliefs, and the institutions that represent them, — Church, Bible, school, the greater part of the world's literature, — all that part of it which conveys any moral or religious impressions, — the memory and lesson of all good examples, — suppose all this were stricken out and man were left with no moral guidance but his native instincts and perceptions. What would be the effect on society of such a loss? What would society be with no knowledge of any but material interests, with no experience of any but material laws, in lands which are now the most civilized portions of the earth? Who can doubt the result? Who can doubt that in any community so conditioned crime would become rampant, anarchy prevail, and social dissolution ensue? With the great and numberless temptations which mere material progress brings, with its ceaseless provocations of lust and wrong, society would be impossible

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without the safeguards, the motives, the laws, the guidance, which existing civilization, with its long accumulations of moral increase, in other words, with its moral capital, supplies. This was precisely the difference between that elder world and ours. This I suppose to have been the difficulty and defect of that primeval society which Hebrew tradition describes, — material progress divorced from moral, — the pursuit of material satisfactions outstripping the moral sense and becoming in consequence more and more emptied of moral life.

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was very great in the earth. . . . And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, for it repenteth me that I have made them.” This was the primitive mode of viewing and stating the failure of the first attempt at civil society. The ancient simplicity

did not shun to think of God as making a misstep and confessing a failure. There is something very charming in that simplicity; I pity the critic who can find it ridiculous. So great was the faith which those ancient people had in their God, — he seemed to them so near, so human, — they could not help crediting him with their own sensations. And their confidence in him and their reverence for him was nowise diminished by regarding him as liable to error. When he saw how wicked man was, he must, they thought, have been disappointed, not anticipating such a result, and have grieved that he made him. We cannot, of course, with our maturer conceptions of Deity, adopt that view of the fact; but the fact remains. That fact is the moral corruption of the early world and the failure of the first societies of men for want of the requisite moral aids.

These failures are no test of the moral nature of man, they only show that the moral life is a gradual growth, that the moral force which constitutes the stay

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and assures the stability of the social state, is the slow accumulation of successive ages of moral and religious teachings and example, a funded capital invested in sacred memories, in public opinion, in social influences, customs, and institutions. I said that the failures of primeval society are no test of the moral nature of man. But they furnished the occasion of such a test in the wonderful power of self-recovery by which society righted itself from that first fall and by which it has repaired so many subsequent failures, and has risen new-born from so many defeats, abolished so many evils and wrongs, and by which, at this day, it continues to advance to new degrees and fairer demonstrations of moral life. Often in this or that country it has seemed for a while irrecoverably sunk in moral ruin, on the eve of dissolution, and still it has emerged from the transient eclipse with new vigor and a better hope. States may perish and nations dissolve, but society profits with each revolution, gains new growths of

moral good, and adds to its *moral capital* from age to age.

This moral progress is due in part to the innate goodness of human nature, and in part to a process of divine education. Without a foundation in human nature on which to build, and without a master-builder to oversee and conduct the work, no moral fabric such as society was destined to be and is striving to become, could ever be erected.

I affirm a radical and preponderating good in human nature. There is evil in man, deep-seated, persistent evil, but the good is deeper and ineradicable. Man is essentially, constitutionally good, and only exceptionally and abnormally bad. In proof of this I appeal to the fact of society. Society exists, it has existed with unbroken continuity for thousands of years. And society is founded in moral qualities; it depends on them for its preservation and support. Mutual attraction, friendship, and good-will are its origin; justice and truth are its guaranties. Take

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x "When I'm good I'm myself;
When I'm bad I'm not myself."

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away these qualities from the nature of man, and society would straightway and inevitably dissolve. Imagine every kind of feeling, every humane sentiment, every right principle, all sense of justice and honor, to be erased from the heart; suppose there were no love of man for man, no sympathy, no instinct of kind affection, no perception of truth or no respect for it, no more respect for truth than falsehood; let men be constitutionally averse to justice and uprightness, loving treachery and wrong for their own sakes; suppose this, and how long would society cohere, how long on such terms would men live and work together in communities and states? What cement will bind when truth and love are not in the composition? Self-interest? Yes! if self-interest knew what self-interest requires. But self-interest is blind, it seeks its own with wild and undiscerning greed. It seeks its own when it steals and kills; it seeks its own in vicious excess, seeks it in impossible and suicidal ways. It is quite as likely to go

wrong as right; it requires a wisdom above its own to secure its own. How can self-love hold society together when the tendency of self-love is to sunder and secede? A community founded in mere self-love and the passions that have self for their only object is an impossibility. In such a community each member would seek his own at the expense of his neighbor; every man's hand would be against his brother, his brother's against him. The consequence would be disintegration, death. I say, then, that the fact of society implies a radical and preponderant good in man, by virtue of which it subsists and has subsisted for unknown time.

My second proof of the radical good in human nature is drawn from language. Language is a faithful exponent and trustworthy record of the nature of man. The thoughts and feelings and beliefs of man are embodied in it, as past creations are embodied in the earth's crust. And language is essentially moral; it bears witness of a moral nature in those who made and

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in those who use it. In every language there are terms expressive of man's delight in moral good. There are languages which have no word for God, but none which are destitute of phrases significant of probity, justice, and mercy. Analyze these phrases, trace their etymology, pierce to their root, and you will find in them evidence not only of an innate perception of moral qualities, but, what is more important, of a just appreciation of those qualities; you will find in them an acknowledgment that the virtues so designated are lovely and praiseworthy qualities; you will find in them the recognition of a moral law, a confession that man is bound to obey that law, that his dignity and happiness consist in obeying it. This confession which universal language breathes is a trustworthy witness of the innate goodness of the human heart.

What is true of language is true no less of the literature of nations. Here, too, I find proof of native ineradicable good. I appeal to that class of writings whose

only or chief end is to please. Observe the method employed for this end in works where imaginary characters and imaginary fortunes are brought to view. Mark by what kind of characters, and of fortunes corresponding therewith, the authors of such compositions, addressing the average mind, attempt to interest and gratify their readers. Observe that the characters with which it is intended that we shall sympathize, and for whom we desire a fortunate end, are invested with noble qualities, are represented as right-minded, honorable, and just. The attributes by which they are expected to win our admiration are moral traits. We say the novel, or play, "ends well" when the good characters set forth in it prosper, or, if they fall victims of their own nobleness, die honored and avenged, and in which the bad characters come to grief and shame. Every work of fiction is an appeal to the moral sense; the purport of it must be in harmony with the moral law. This is the demand which the public make of it; this

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is essential to its success. Let the author contravene this order, let him contradict the moral law in his composition, let him paint characters devoid of every virtue and stained with every vice, and attempt to engage our sympathy in behalf of such, and he will find that he has undertaken a bootless task; he will find it impossible to construct a story on this principle which shall give satisfaction. Though he choose his readers from the vilest of mankind, though he write for profligates and felons, and call in outlaws and outcasts to be his critics, he will find none so abandoned as to relish and approve a work so planned. And so literature bears witness of the radical and ineradicable good in human kind.

But the mere existence and even preponderance of good in man is not of itself sufficient to secure the moral progress which I claim for society, will not suffice to rear that fabric of a perfect state which reason, I think, demands as the consummation of human history; that City of God to which prophecy points and for

which Humanity hopes and waits. The radical good in human nature is one factor in this product, the other, I have said, is divine education. Human nature was the same that it now is in the earliest antediluvian time, but society how different ! What accessions of knowledge and insight, what stores of experience, what culture, what improved legislation, what social reforms, what provisions for the present and the future, what guaranties, what confidence and hope ! The difference is due to the guiding, educating Power that works unseen in human things, ever educating good from evil, causing the wrath of man to praise it, the failures and miscarriages of human effort to justify it, and leading the race through ceaseless conflicts, through manifold trials and defeats, through successive revolutions, migrations, empires, religions, to its present advanced and hopeful state. The Spirit of God has never been wanting to human kind. Where its action is most conspicuous we acknowledge and adore it as "revelation," as di-

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vine dispensation. But that Spirit is always and everywhere active, copresent to every age and phase of society. We must not belittle the great idea of Revelation by imagining it confined to certain marked eras and manifestations. The revelation that came with the word and life of Jesus Christ was a great and central illumination, but the light that shone so resplendent in him was none other than that which the evangelist says "lighteth every man that cometh into the world," the uncreated, inextinguishable spark of Godhead by which Humanity subsists until now. Revelation is not spasmodic and intermittent, but continuous and progressive. There never was a time when God was not revealing himself with such illuminations and visions of the truth as each age and people were able to comprehend. Nor must we conceive of revelation as the action of God upon the world from without, as the introduction of an alien power that announces itself with portents, appears for a little while and then vanishes

away. It is nothing foreign, but the Spirit of God in man which giveth him understanding, and which here and there in certain elect natures acts with exceptional power and speaks with peculiar authority. All revelation is in man and through man, and that revelation is ever proceeding. From the first beginnings of human society God has been ever in communion with the race. Even in that wild and profligate age which the record describes, when the wickedness of man was so great in the earth, there was no interruption; the divine communication was still maintained. Tradition conceived it as an oral colloquy with Noah. The conception is puerile, but its import is truth. In substance tradition was right; there was that communication of God with the better mind of the time. There always has been. God was always in the world suggesting, impelling, restraining, guiding: applying evil to the elucidation and promotion of good, and leading man up to Himself through all the aberrations of his thought

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and desire, through all the wanderings of his will, through all the successes of his endeavor, and through all its defeats. And this I conceive to be the sum and end of that divine education by which society is to reach and realize at last its moral consummation; God leading man up to himself, filling the soul and the world with his idea, making his will to appear the only politic way and goal, and Himself the supreme good.

When, in the light of this doctrine of divine education and social progress, I revert to the record and read how wicked man could be and was in the olden time, how "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually," I am not disturbed nor alarmed by the contemplation of such a state, for though I must regard it as a manifestation of the same human nature which still subsists, and of which we all partake, I see it to be one whose conditions are past and can never return; I can look upon it as I do on those saurian monsters, the lizard-fishes,

x "History is God progressively incarnating himself in humanity and thus reconciling the world to himself."

and pterodactyls of the ante-human world ; as outgrown horrors, the crude abortions of immature nature in its first essays.

Enlightened with this doctrine and armed with this faith, I can never fear for humanity, nor doubt of its final destination. I may fear for my country when evil rulers are in power and evil counsels at the helm. I may fear the troubles of the passing time, but I cannot fear for humanity. For I know that its course is onward and irrepressibly, irreversibly onward. I know that unerring Wisdom will make the faults of each age, the calamities of nations, and the failure of states the ministers and means of a better growth, and will lead its own with strong attraction through the woes of the present, through the ruptures and wrongs of the hour, and over the wrecks of time, into clearer day and serener life, and that out of the experience of so many ages, and the contributions of so many nations, will come at length the perfect Order, the reign of Reason, the City of God.

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“And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark: for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. . . . For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him. . . . And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.” — GENESIS vii.

AMONG the traditions which date from a period beyond the reach of documental history there is none so widely diffused, so generally accepted, and none of such grave significance as that of “the Flood”; a deluge which destroyed the human race with the exception of a chosen few, who, being forewarned and forearmed, survived

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the catastrophe and became the progenitors of a new and worthier kind.

Criticism has analyzed the Biblical account of Noah and his ark, and flippant wits have amused themselves with pointing out the inconsistencies and impossibilities sufficiently obvious in this simple tale. That is easily done. It needs but little ingenuity to show that a box of three hundred cubits length by fifty in breadth and thirty in height could not contain seven pairs of all the clean and two of all the unclean animals then in existence, with fodder for their maintenance during a hundred and fifty days. We understand all that without demonstration. What more concerns us, and is not quite so obvious, is the answer to the question, what nucleus of historic truth this rough shell may enclose. What is the real fact embodied in this tradition? To dismiss the whole story as a myth, having no appreciable foundation in fact, is a more uncritical proceeding and a greater offence against reason and common sense than

to take the narrative without further question, as the piety of former generations received it, and was edified by it.

A tradition of such duration and extent must be presumed to have some foundation in fact. A frank comparison of the Hebrew record with the annals of other races, in other and very distant parts of the world, confirms the truth of the Biblical account, but reveals at the same time the limitations with which the narrative is to be received. All the branches of the Aryan and Semitic races, including, beside Jewish and Christian nations, the Chaldaic, Phœnician, Persian, Hindu, together with the Latin and Greek, discover traces, more or less distinct, of this tradition. On the other hand, the monuments of the two most ancient civilizations of which we have any knowledge — the Egyptian and the Chinese — contain no account of, or allusion to, Noah's deluge. From which it appears, in the first place, that the flood was not universal, and secondly, that it did not take place until after the races

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(the Turanian and Chamitic) which peopled the eastern and southwestern extremities of the ancient world had migrated — if such was their origin — from Central Asia, the seat of the catastrophe; and that thirdly, it was prior to the Aryan migration from that birthplace of nations.

It is curious to find traditions of a flood among the native American tribes. Whether these refer to the same event with the Asiatic, or whether they commemorate another, independent catastrophe of the Western continent, it is impossible to say. It is further remarkable that all the traditions which record this event — American, Oceanic, Asiatic — connect with the deluge which destroyed the human race the salvation of certain elect individuals by means of a ship or chest; and most of them affirm a miraculous premonition of the coming disaster, by which these individuals were led to make the necessary provision for their escape.

The Chaldean historian, Berosus, relates

that Kronos, or Seth, the old Babylonian divinity, revealed to Xisuthrus, in a dream, that on the fifteenth day of the eighth month the flood would commence in which all mankind would perish, that he must bury all the books in the city of Helios and build a ship five stadia long, two stadia broad (3,125 feet by 1,250 feet), for himself, his children, and relatives, provide stores of food and drink, and take with him all sorts of animals. Xisuthrus did so. The flood came. When it ceased he sent out birds, which found neither food nor resting-place and came back to the ship. He repeated this twice; the third time the birds did not return, and Xisuthrus knew that the land had emerged and found that the ship was landed on a mountain.

The Hindu legend declares that Manu, the Indian Noah, was warned by a fish of the impending deluge, and admonished to construct a ship, which, when prepared, the fish itself, one of the incarnations of the god Vishnu, guided to a place of safe-

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ty. According to a North American tradition, reported by Schoolcraft, the accurate observer of the aborigines of this continent, it was a dog who gave his master the friendly warning and the necessary instructions in view of the coming catastrophe. The late Baron Humboldt relates that several of the Mexican nations had paintings representing the favored pair (Coxcox and his wife Xochiquetzatl) who escaped the deluge floating in a bark, the only living forms in a universe of waters. The Mexican tradition, moreover, has this singular appendix. The men born after the deluge are dumb, and a dove from the top of a tree is represented distributing tongues.

On the whole, there can be no reasonable question as to the historic truth of the flood recorded in the Book of Genesis. It was not universal,—the phrase “the whole earth” is continually used in the Bible in a more or less limited sense,—but sufficiently destructive within its bounds to fix an indelible impression in

the human mind, and to send down its record to the latest time, though committed for thousands of years to oral tradition alone. It was subsequent to the last of the great revolutions of the globe, and falls within the present geological epoch. The earth is known to have passed through many revolutions, or, if that phrase be thought objectionable, through many changes before arriving at its present state. It shows the action on its surface of fire, water, ice; above all, if that may be termed an agent which is only a condition of action, of immeasurable time. Before the rise of geological science the indications of former submersion in various parts of the earth, such as the presence of marine shells in regions far above the level of the sea, were hailed by theologians and defenders of the Bible as proofs of the deluge recorded in the Book of Genesis. The progress of that science has put a very different interpretation on those facts, referring them to ages prior, by millions of years, to the date of

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Noah's flood; but they so far confirm the truth of the Biblical narrative that they prove the general fact of past disturbance and the changeful condition of the globe.

The fact of a deluge submerging a considerable part of the Eastern Continent, and the preservation of a small number of the inhabitants of the countries in which it prevailed, being granted, the rest of the narrative must be regarded as traditional accretion representing the speculations and imaginings of after ages which gathered around this historical nucleus. The point of chief interest for us in the story of the flood is its moral aspect considered in relation to human society and the moral government of God.

The Hebrew account represents the deluge as the penalty of sin, as a consequence of human depravity,—the method employed by Divine Providence to sweep away and blot out of existence a state of society so corrupt as to admit of no reform. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of

the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them." This is the reflection of an ancient writer, representing, no doubt, the mind of his time, on the great catastrophe which interrupted the progress of society in the old Asiatic world and made a chasm in history imperfectly bridged by tradition. It is not a view which enlightened Christian thought can adopt in the sense in which it is here propounded. It contradicts our conception both of the natural and the moral world, and the method of divine government. Of the natural world, because the material order, as we conceive, has its own distinct laws, and obeys a sequence of cause and effect entirely independent of human society. Once established, that order would proceed if the

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earth were without a human occupant, and cannot be supposed to be modified by human action. Natural events, we conceive, must be referred to natural causes; and those causes are the necessary operation of laws coeval with creation.

On the other hand, the moral world has also its own laws independent of the physical. Moral transgressions have their moral penalties, and although within the limits of the human organism, certain vices may bear fruit in physical effects, they cannot be conceived as reaching beyond those limits into the cosmic mechanism, and so affecting the natural order of events.

And then it contradicts our conceptions of the being and government of God to imagine him dealing with moral subjects in the way supposed, calling in a natural catastrophe to be the executioner of moral laws; to think of him as watching the course of human conduct, and when that reaches a certain degree of corruption, instead of reviving it by his Spirit, or suffering it to work out its natural result,

bringing down the elements upon it and overwhelming it with natural ruin.

But this is the aspect which the case would present to a mind in that stage of intellectual and spiritual development which this record addresses, from which it proceeds. Combining the two facts of great depravity in human kind and an overwhelming catastrophe in nature, the primitive mind would suppose a consequential relation between these facts, the wrath of God supplying the connecting link. It is the exercise on a larger scale — the application to a world instead of an individual — of that propensity to see a judgment of God in every calamity that befalls; which hastens to infer a man's guilt from his ill fortune, as the people of Melita judged Paul to be a murderer when they saw the viper fasten on his hand. When the excavations in the buried city of Pompeii brought to light the traces of a moral corruption too common in ancient society, modern censors pronounced the volcanic disturbance which destroyed that city

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to be a special judgment of God on the sinful inhabitants, — a conclusion implying that if the morals of Pompeii had been pure, the fires of Vesuvius would have slumbered or found a different vent.

Jesus rebukes this way of interpreting calamities. He indicates the self-ignorance and self-righteousness that lurk in all such judgments. "There were present some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Think not that wicked men only are overtaken with disaster, or that all whom disaster befalls are sinners, as if disaster were the proper

and only penalty of sin ; but look into your own hearts ; you will find there, it is likely, sins of your own to be repented of, — sin that without repentance will bring death.

Public calamities and personal guilt bear no such relation to each other as the interpretation in question supposes. If they happen to coincide, the coincidence, however opportune, according to our human view of fitness and justice, cannot be affirmed to be an ordained part of the penal legislation of God. Calamities befall the evil and the good ; they are quite as likely to befall the latter as the former, as nature smiles on both alike. When, in 1755, the city of Lisbon was destroyed by an earthquake which brought instantaneous death to twenty or thirty thousand citizens, there was much speculation among philosophers and divines concerning the providence of God which permitted so dire a catastrophe, but no pretence of extraordinary guilt on the part of the victims, of whom the greater part were assembled in their

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churches and engaged, at the time, in the public offices of religion.

A few years ago we were startled with tidings of the burning of a church in a distant city of this continent, whereby two thousand and upward, mostly women and children, were said to have perished in circumstances the most appalling that the human imagination can conceive. Does any one suppose that these two thousand were sinners above all the people of Santiago because they encountered this horrid fate? On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that the awful holocaust numbered many of the purest and most devoted citizens among its victims. The laws of nature will take their course, however numerous and however precious the lives that stand in the way of their execution. If a jet of burning gas comes in contact with inflammable draperies, those draperies will take fire, that fire will be communicated to whatever combustible it can lay hold of, and the burning desolation will proceed, whether empty walls or a

temple containing the flower and elect of a city be the scene and subject of the conflagration. God in nature, acting in and through natural laws, is no respecter of persons, and whether or not, as the poet says, "He sees with *equal* eye, as lord of all," it is certain that he sees, without interfering to prevent,

"A hero perish or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,
And now a bubble burst and now a world."

Thus we obtain, as it seems to me, the true point of view for this arch-catastrophe of human tradition, — "the flood." If in its effects it proved a penal operation, overwhelming and destroying a flagitious race, whose every thought was evil, we cannot apply this view of its effect as the true and sufficient interpretation of its origin. Its origin was a law of nature, or rather a conjuncture and co-operation of many laws all tending to one issue, — that issue a crisis in the natural history of the region in which it occurred.

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If, now, it be claimed that the operation of these laws and the crisis in which their action resulted, were so timed by that Power of which the so-called laws or nature are but the method and the manifestation, as to coincide with a great social crisis, the consummation of those vicious tendencies by which the constitution of society had been disintegrated and rendered incapable of further development or even continuance;— if, in other words, it be claimed to be a part of the divine order that a cosmic revolution should coincide with the dissolution of society by the action of internal moral causes, I see no philosophic objection to that view, but, on the contrary, accept it as, on the whole, the most rational view of the matter. But observe, that according to this view the action of the deluge is not retributory but remedial; its purpose is not vindictive but beneficent; it mercifully hastens the extinction of that whose existence had become to itself an unmitigated curse.

And, perhaps, if we scrutinize more closely the language of the record, we shall find precisely this meaning in it: "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. . . . And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them: and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." God is represented as acting, not in the spirit of vengeance, but of penitence and grief, according to the childish conception of the time.

The terms "repent" and "grieve" can have only a figurative signification for us as applied to God, but the language suggests, on nearer examination, a deeper import than perhaps our first interpretation had found in it. God repents that he has made man. The idea is, that human nature in that stage and phase of it was an unsuccessful experiment. Now, if we study the course of creative action in the natural world, we find a mode of procedure which, considered only in its objects and results,

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may, without any impeachment of Divine Wisdom, be termed experimenting. We see successive attempts at organization gradually advancing in their several kinds until they reach their full development and final perfection. Take a single organ, the human hand. We may trace through successive stages of animal life the several steps by which this organ reached its present state. It first appears as the fin of the fish, a membrane projecting from the shoulder of the animal, designed to assist its motion. The organ is next seen in a more advanced state in the flipper of the marine quadruped. Here it begins to divide itself into five distinct articulations or fingers. A fuller prophecy of nature's design in this member may be traced in the claw of the various land tribes, until at last the design is accomplished and the prophecy fulfilled in the human hand. We cannot call the initial forms through which this organ passed before it attained its final perfection *unsuccessful* experiments, seeing they answer their purpose in the

organisms to which they belong, but we may properly enough term them *experiments*, i. e. progressive efforts which find their consummation in man.

Again, the earth has passed through successive preparatory states before becoming the abode of intellectual and moral life. In the ages antecedent to the present geological epoch, we find it peopled with those saurian and other monsters which may be regarded as rude experiments in animal life,—huge unwieldy organizations whose nature and proportions, however well suited to the state of the globe in which they are found, are wholly incongruous with the earth of our day, and were not deemed worthy to be perpetuated beyond the revolutions that convulsed and concluded their time. If now we should say, in the style of those records, that God repented of those monsters—those megatheria and dinotheria and mastodons which he made—and resolved to destroy them from the face of the earth; that way of putting it would be

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only a more simple and childlike statement of the fact that such organizations were not consistent with the plan of creation and were out of place in the new-made earth,—a statement identical in form with that of the text concerning primeval man.

The human world of that age and region may be regarded as an early experiment in human nature,—let us say an unsuccessful social experiment. Unsuccessful, not in any sense which impugns the divine wisdom and goodness, unsuccessful, not in relation to the plan of Providence and the whole of human history, but unsuccessful considered in itself, or viewed in relation to its own date. It pleased the Author of human nature to leave it in a measure free, i. e. uncontrolled by any overbearing moral force from without. But the first experiment in human society, based on moral freedom, must needs, as I have said before, be unsuccessful for want of accumulated *moral capital* sufficient to counterbalance the activity of

lawless passion. The moral capital on and by which society now subsists and has subsisted for many generations, and is ever more able to subsist and advance, is the gradual accumulation of all the epochs of human history up to this date. What Christ and Christ-like men of all ages and religions have given to the world in the way of thought and example is gathered and garnered and hoarded and put to usury by the overruling divine economy. The interest of it, forever added to the principal, with the compound growth of the Spirit, constitutes a *fund* which more and more redounds to the order, growth, and salvation of man.

To this fund the patriarch Noah was one of the contributors, — the only one whose benefaction has crossed the chasm in which so many ages of human history are swallowed up. He towers aloft in the mystic twilight of his time, above the wreck of a perished world, the planter of a new world, to form which three continents went forth from his house.

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His lesson to us from the waste of waters is the indestructibleness of moral worth amid all the revolutions of nature and time. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and must bear the doom of its fleshly nature. Many splendid achievements of genius, many fair cities, many monuments and arts of primeval humanity perished in that wreck; many mighty and brave and beautiful among the sons and daughters of men went down with the flood. A whole generation is blotted out. Moral worth alone survives, pushes its way through storm and flood, and plants itself anew in the new-made earth. So, always, in the downfall of nations and the wreck of things, that only survives which is worthy to endure, which has in it the seed of God. So in the moral deluge which swept the old Roman world, Christianity alone rode out the storm and came forth conquering and to conquer from the shock of time.

A divine communication, the narrative says, foreshadowed to the patriarch the

final doom and the way of escape. Where faith is, there is always a divine communication, an inspired forethought, a providence, a self-helping energy, which commands the crisis where self-indulgence and unbelief succumb. The righteous are in league with God. A truer instinct inspires their course and directs their steps; they are saved by wisdom from above, where the wisdom of this world is gravelled and swamped in its own conceit.

The history of Noah is the history of faith in every age. Forever the deluge impends that must sweep away our anchorage "on this bank and shoal of time." The fashion and goods of this world are forfeit always to universal mortality. The wise man heeds the warning voice of the Spirit and builds in silence the ark within, and awaits with composure whatever may betide,

"Knowing the heart of man is set to be
The centre of this world, above the which
These revolutions of disturbances
Still roll.

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. . . Whose strong effects are such
As he must bear, being powerless to redress,
And that unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man." ✕

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“ And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar ; and they dwelt there. . . . And they said, Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto the heaven, and let us make us a name lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language ; and this they begin to do : and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth. And they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel, because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth.” — GENESIS xi. 1 *et seq.*

THIS weighty but brief fragment is all that Hebrew tradition has preserved of a great revolution, perhaps the greatest in

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the annals of time, — the breaking up of a vast empire embracing nigh all the civilized world, and the consequent dispersion of civilized man ; the growth of new nations, polities, tongues.

The story is no myth, though the form is mythical. It is a veritable part of the world's history, belonging, though it does, to what we call the prehistoric time, that is, to ages antecedent to written documents and chronicled only in dim tradition, and in what remains of their own creations. A veritable piece of history, and not only so, but a very considerable cycle of history, embracing centuries in its term and scope, — the story of an empire in a few brief lines ! That wondrous Tower of Babel is a fact. A portion of the mighty fabric is still extant, still serves a landmark to the nomad tribes of the great Babylonian plain. A mountain of ruins, the accumulation of forty centuries, still attests the audacious proportions of one of the eldest of the works of man. It is said that Alexander the Great, impressed

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with the grandeur of what remained in his day, conceived the bold project of restoring the ancient structure. Ten thousand workmen were employed for months in clearing away the rubbish, when the conqueror died and the work was arrested, never to be resumed again.

The narrative is mythical in form, like that of the deluge and other primeval histories. We have to discriminate, and find no difficulty in discriminating, the antique, childish view of the facts from the facts themselves. Such statements as that of the Lord's coming down to see what the people were doing on the plain of Shinar, and talking to himself about his purposes and acts and the reason and motive which prompted them, are primitive conceptions of providential processes, nowise essential to the story. And when it is said that the Lord confounded the speech of the Babel-builders, we readily understand that what is thus represented as a special and fitful act of Almighty Power, originating in a sudden mood of the Godhead, was in

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fact the result of the gradual operation of divine laws through a series of years. The name of Nimrod's city is represented in the story as derived from that diversity of speech which originated there, but the name, in fact, preceded the diversity of speech; its real meaning is the Gate (or Seat) of God. Moreover, the phrase "the whole earth," as commonly used in the Bible, is not to be taken in an absolute or scientific sense. It is not intended to include the entire globe, or even the greater part thereof, but is loosely employed to designate the whole of that particular portion which the writer or speaker has in mind at the time. In the present case it denotes the country bordering on the Tigris and the Euphrates, the seat of the earliest civilization and the scene of the events of Biblical history antecedent to the narrative before us.

Eliminating thus what is mythical or crude from the substance of the story, we have, as historic facts, the original unity of the human family, the uniformity of

the language spoken by the early world, the formation of a powerful empire under Nimrod in Southwestern Asia, of which Babel, or Babylon, was the capital, systematic efforts at concentration, the attempt to make the empire of Nimrod universal, and for this end to build a tower which should serve as a beacon to the civilized world; then the failure of this attempt, the dissolution of the empire, the dispersion of the people that composed it, the division of one nation into many, and finally the development of one original language into many differing tongues. These are the facts presented in this narrative; there is no reason to question their authenticity; they rest in part on evidence independent of the Bible. All recent ethnological investigations tend to confirm them.

These facts are not accidental, they are not the outbreak of human caprice or arbitrary acts of Divine Power, but the necessary operation and legitimate result of the laws which govern human things, parts of that providential order which shapes

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and constitutes human history. They are stages in the ever-proceeding education of the human race.

I apply this view to the two most important points of the narrative, — the dispersion of the human family and the consequent or accompanying division of the one original language into many different tongues.

The human race is originally one. That portion of it, I mean, which comes within the scope and record of history. Human beings, in the merely zoölogical sense, possessing the human form, but incapable of civilization, incapable of social progress, may have sprung from different sources in different quarters of the globe. But man, as the subject of history, civilized man, there is reason to believe, had one origin, and formed originally one family. This is the Biblical idea of the human race. Not that the doctrine is expressly taught, but it seems to be implied, and has generally been thought to be implied in the narratives of the Book of Genesis. And philo-

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sophic minds have been led by arguments independent of the Bible, by the facts of history and science, to the same conclusion.

One of the proofs of this original unity is the affinity, more or less obvious, which may be traced between most of the languages spoken on this globe by civilized peoples, and which seems to indicate a common origin, an arch-dialect, from which they have diverged and to which their coincidences must be referred. This affinity of languages, if and so far as it can be established, goes to confirm the statement of the text, "the whole earth was of one language and one speech." A common language proves the common origin of the human race or renders it at least exceedingly probable.

If, then, mankind were originally one, speaking one language, combining in one nation, exhibiting one type, why did not this unity continue? why was this uniformity broken? Why, in the phraseology of the text, did God "confound" the common speech and divide and disperse

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the united race? Why this multiplicity of tongues and nations, this endless diversity of feature, custom, language, faith, on the earth?

The answer must be sought in the law of growth. All growth implies division, divergence, opposition, as its necessary law. How strikingly this law is exemplified in the growths of the vegetable world! The plant no sooner pierces the clod and emerges upon the surface of the ground than straightway it begins to divide and continues to divide and to send forth branches on this side and on that so long as it continues to grow and to live. The solar system and all the systems that people space are supposed to be successive and progressive evolutions of a single substance, which, ever disparting and dispersing, has developed out of one a universe of worlds. Humanity, in the counsels of Divine Wisdom, was not to remain stationary but to grow, to unfold its attributes and powers. And, in order to grow, it must divide and disperse. If man had

been confined to the portion of earth first peopled, his progress in social, material, and mental development, as well as in numbers, would have been arrested in the first stages. God willed that the race should multiply and replenish the earth, that human nature should unfold itself in all directions. In order to this, it needed that mankind should divide and disperse, form colonies, wander forth into new regions; each colony in turn, after reaching a certain stage of maturity, sending forth new ones, and each new colony increasing more rapidly than the parent stock. Such, to this day, has been the method of human progress. The population of Europe has not been sensibly affected by the constant influx of immigration to this continent since the fifteenth century, while out of that immigration a new Europe has grown up which is fast outstripping the old.

If humanity had been confined to the land of its nativity, its development would have been one-sided, partial, incomplete. The same local conditions, the same cli-

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mate and traditions would still have produced the same characters, the same culture, from age to age. Such has been the lot of the nations inhabiting that portion of the earth. Immobility is their common characteristic. A stationary, narrow, one-sided culture is the standing type of Oriental life.

Unity in variety is the law of growth. It was necessary that man should know other climes, should be subjected to every variety of condition, witness every aspect of nature, become familiar with every portion and product of the planet on which he is cast, in order that every side of his complex nature might be unfolded and every faculty brought into play. Therefore, God, "of one blood," made many nations "to dwell on all the face of the earth." Therefore, he gave to some the burning tropics, to some the arctic circle, to some the temperate zone. To one portion of the human race he assigned the dark skin and obscure conditions of the African, to another the fervid heart and wandering life

of the Bedouin, to another still the high culture, the enterprise and energy of the European. Therefore, he appointed different polities, institutions, faiths; and brought humanity into contact with all external and internal conditions, with all material and spiritual forces and facts, that, by means of all, he might complete the great work of time, — the education of the race. And this process of division and divergence, which began five thousand years ago, will proceed until man has thoroughly surveyed and penetrated and learned by heart the globe he inhabits, and resolved in his experience every fact and condition of terrestrial life.

Coincident and co-ordinate with the separation and dispersion of human kind the narrative affirms a confusion of tongues; i. e. a division or development of the aboriginal language into new and different dialects, the speakers of which become mutually unintelligible to each other. This, too, is a natural process governed by fixed laws, a part of the necessary and di-

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vine order. There is here no extraordinary or exceptional agency. The speech of the Babel-builders was confounded by the operation of causes which must have produced a diversity of tongues without a Babel as well as with one. So great, in fact, was the natural tendency to difference of speech in undeveloped man that a miracle would have been required to prevent it. Languages fully formed and possessing a written vocabulary and a literature change little from century to century. But, prior to the art of writing, while speech lives only in oral communications, it is liable to great fluctuations, additions, varying inflexions, and divergent formations contingent on new varieties of human nature and new exigencies of thought and life. In the case before us we have the population of a great and growing empire engaged in an enterprise of national aggrandizement, while language was in its infancy and when the number of words already in use was wholly inadequate to the designation and dis-

cussion of the topics about which it was necessary to confer. New exigencies, new ideas, were constantly requiring new expressions. These expressions would naturally differ with different individuals and clans; new and independent vocabularies would be formed, new inflexions, which gradually developed into new languages.

Language is an exponent of character, and will necessarily vary with different individuals and bodies of men while it exists in that fluid and unsettled state which precedes the use of it as a written dialect. The phenomenon which this narrative describes has been often repeated in the history of nations. The languages spoken by the Indian tribes that once peopled this continent are related to each other by affinities which indicate an original identity between them. They were probably one in some remote age, but so different are they now that the use of one of them does not enable the speaker to converse himself, or to understand one who converses in another; and so fluid that

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the missionary who revisited a tribe after a lapse of ten years found a new dialect, and was no longer able to make himself understood in the old. Our own language was long subject to great fluctuations; it differed widely in different provinces of England, until the use of it as a written tongue, the art of printing, and especially the received version of the Bible, gave it a fixed and permanent character. The English spoken in the time of Edward III. would be unintelligible at the present day. Even now, the dialects spoken by different classes of society and different provinces of Great Britain — and the same is true of the dialects of Germany, France, and other nations of Europe — differ so widely as to somewhat embarrass oral communication between them.

In view of these facts we can easily understand how differences of speech, amounting to an unintelligible confusion of tongues, should arise among the early inhabitants of the earth in the centuries that elapsed between the first settlement

of the plain of Shinar and the final dispersion of the tribes. And these differences, which began to manifest themselves before that dispersion, which contributed to bring about that event, would, of course, be multiplied and hardened by it. And so the dissolution of the first Babylonian—the first universal—empire is historically connected with the first division, say, rather, with the earliest development of human speech. It marks that crisis in human progress when language, which up to that period had reached but the infant, monosyllabic stage,—the stage represented by the language of China at this day,*—developed itself into new and nobler, more capable, more flexible, more expressive forms of oral and written communication.

The destruction of every great empire, in periods antecedent to the art of printing, has been attended with a like result. "All new languages," says Bunsen, "have

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* Bunsen supposes that the Chinese language is essentially or structurally the same with that which was spoken in Babel before the dispersion.

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arisen from the breaking up of some great political bond which imposed one speech on its constituents." Thus the dissolution of the Roman Empire gave birth to five or six of the languages of modern Europe, all of which are derived, with various admixtures and modifications, from the Latin.

X The real significance of Babel, then, in relation to the highest of human functions, — speech, — is not corruption, but progress. What the record, in accordance with the childish feeling of the time which produced it, represents as a sudden and miraculous confusion of tongues, reveals itself to our riper understanding as method and law, as a part of that orderly process which language, in common with every other power and product of human nature, obeys, and by which it proceeds from its rudimental to its perfect state.

So much for the scientific and historic import of this ancient fragment; but the story has a moral which claims attention before we dismiss the record and the theme.

The kingdom founded by Nimrod in Mesopotamia five thousand years ago, the kingdom which culminated in the daring enterprise of the Tower of Babel, is the first attempt, so far as we know, at universal empire. Nimrod, its founder, "began," it is said, "to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord." Or, according to the Alexandrian version, "against the Lord," opposed to the Lord, God-defying. "Wherefore it is said, 'even as Nimrod, the mighty hunter against the Lord.' And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel." Which means that Nimrod was the first conqueror, the first autocrat, the first who changed the patriarchal rule for the despotic; the earliest name in the bloody heraldry of selfish ambition; founder of a line not yet extinct, but still reproducing itself from age to age. The idea of a tower which should reach to the heavens, of a city which should be the world's capital, an empire which should gather all kindreds and tribes under one name, in one confederate body, was a project worthy

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such a character and worthy the infancy of the race, before man had measured the extent of his powers, or had learned the limits of human nature and of human life. No wonder that the mighty of that day, the "giants" of the earth, should be moved to attempt what has been so often attempted since. The Babel-builders have had their fellows in every age. Lust of dominion in every age has attempted works as proud in their design, as ridiculous in their conclusion, as the tower which was planned to defy nature and to vanquish time, — works arrested in mid-progress by the insufficiency and confusion of those engaged in them, monuments of human frailty bearing on their front: "These men began to build and were not able to finish." "Go to, now," says ambition, "let us build us a city and a tower, and let us make us a name." There went a tradition among the Hebrews that the builders of that impossible tower caused each his name to be inscribed on one of the bricks of which the structure was composed, hop-

ing by that means to perpetuate them to endless ages. What those names were who knows or cares to know? But one of them has survived, and that only as the name of a monstrous, lawless force, not a child of humanity, with whom we associate human interests and affections. Thus the usurpers and lawless leaders of their time vainly endeavor to perpetuate their name with their works. Thus their works perish with them, and their names, if they survive at all, survive as unmeaning ciphers written upon ruins. The most gifted, the most successful, the world-renowned conquerors, — the Alexanders, the Cæsars, the Attilas, the Tamerlanes, the Napoleons, names “at which the world grew pale,” — remain now only

“To point a moral or adorn a tale.”

One thing more. The story of Babel imports a division and dispersion of the human family which, as we have seen, was a necessary condition of human development and progress. But Christian

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prophecy contemplates a time when division and dispersion, having done their work, shall cease at last, and a process of assimilation commence which shall end by restoring to the race its original unity on a new and higher plane; not in the way of gift but achievement,—the result of millennial growths, reposing on millennial experience, fortified by impregnable guaranties, assured by divine law. Astronomers tell us that the heavenly systems, after reaching the extreme of divergence and exhausting the range of their centrifugal forces, tend to reunion, and seem, in some regions explored by the telescope to be already merging into one. May we not hope for the earthly systems of society, now so widely sundered, so sharply divided, a like destiny? May we not look for a day of restoration when the process of reunion for man shall begin? May we not say that through the historic Atonement and through the reconciling power of Christian truth, it has already begun? Though all attempts to

force a union by extension of empire in the spirit of the Babel-builders must prove abortive and end in confusion and ruin, there is reason to believe that a closer union of man with man the world over is designed in the order of God. Not a forced combination by secular or ecclesiastical bonds, but a voluntary union in the name of that humanity which is common to all, in the name of Him in whom a divine humanity was revealed, in whom there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free. To "gather into one the nations that are scattered" is represented in the New Testament as the mission of Christ. Born of one parentage, sprung from one stock, all men, even now, are essentially one. Under all the diversities of government, custom, color, clime, which divide the nations, there is a unity deeper than all these. The humanity of each nation is older and deeper than all its traditions, than institutions, language, race. One blood circulates in all human veins, one divinity lives in all souls. One spirit is

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2nd. Acts 17:1-31, the historical
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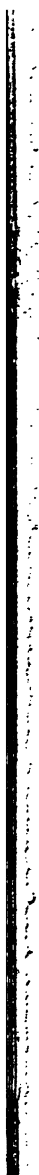
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over all and in all. Let us not forget it, in all our janglings and necessary conflicts, that we and our adversaries, be they individuals or be they nations, at bottom are one, divinely one; and while in humility and sober resignation we accept, as providential appointment, the inevitable feuds and collisions of our time, let us cast our thought beyond the time and rejoice to contemplate in the spirit what we may not witness in the flesh.

XI.

JEHOVAH AND ABRAHAM.

A HEBREW IDYL.



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"And the Lord appeared unto Abraham in the plain of Mamre." — GENESIS xviii. 1.

THE reader versed in the writings of the Old Testament encounters in the narrative thus introduced the only statement these Scriptures contain of a converse of God with man, which condescends to physical details and simulates the Gentile theophanies. Jehovah, attended by two angels, visits Abraham in his tent. The patriarch receives them with zealous hospitality, washes their feet in the way of ancient courtesy, causes a calf to be killed and dressed, and cakes to be baked. He provides for their refreshment the best which his stores afford, "and set it before them, and he stood by them and they did eat." After this entertainment, which the heav-

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only visitors reward with the promise of a long posterity to Abraham and Sara his wife, the two angels depart on their way to the doomed city of Sodom, but Jehovah remains behind. And "Abraham stood yet before the Lord." Then ensues that remarkable colloquy in which Abraham intercedes with Jehovah in behalf of the righteous dwelling in Sodom, who ought not, he pleads, to be destroyed with the guilty. "That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked. . . . Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Suppose there are fifty righteous in Sodom, shall they share the fate of the rest? "And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, I will spare all the place for their sakes." But suppose the number to be somewhat less. "Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous." "And he said, If I find there forty and five I will not destroy it." "Peradventure there shall be but forty," but thirty, but twenty. To each of which suppositions the Eternal

replies, "I will not do it for forty's," "for thirty's," "for twenty's sake." Finally, he pleads: "I will speak yet but this once. Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake. And the Lord went his way as soon as he had left communing with Abraham, and Abraham returned unto his place."

The whole narrative — dinner and conversation included — is exceptional. A visible, palpable appearance of God to man is rare in Hebrew tradition, which differs widely in this respect from that of the Greek and Roman world. Usually, it is the "Word of the Lord" addressing the mind, or the "Angel of the Lord" addressing the sense, that mediates the divine communication. But here the narrative exhibits a visible personal appearance of the national Jehovah to the great progenitor of the Hebrew people,—a God who is not only seen and heard, but touched, who not only walks and talks but eats!

There are three ways of dealing with these Biblical portents. The first is that

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of unconditional acceptance and literal interpretation. The second is unqualified rejection and scornful repudiation. The third is frank but reverential criticism. The first was possible only on the ground of blind submission to ecclesiastical authority. It was possible only while the use of reason in the interpretation of Scripture was forbidden or unknown. It is not possible at the present day to critical readers who aim to comprehend, and seek to adjust with rational views and Christian truth what they read. When the New Testament declares that "no man hath seen God at any time or can see him," it makes the literal, historical interpretation of the narrative in question impossible with any who accept that teaching.

The second manner of handling such narratives—that of unqualified and impatient rejection—is very natural and very common at that stage of criticism, or in that condition of mind in which, whilst the pressure of authority has ceased to operate and blind veneration is out-

grown, the spirit of friendly and reverent inquiry has not yet succeeded to the vacant place. It is very natural and very common in that state of mind and to that cast of character in which the negative tendency predominates over the affirmative, in which "no" is a readier word in Biblical criticism and in all criticism than "yes" or "perhaps." To minds so conditioned and characters so constituted a narrative like this — a tale of Jehovah sitting at meat — is so repugnant, so revoltingly absurd that they incontinently and indignantly reject the whole story as the monstrous invention of childish superstition, and perhaps repudiate the book which contains it, together with it and because of it. The feeling is natural but the judgment is not philosophical, nor is the state of mind in which it originates conclusive or propitious to right results. Many things in the Bible are sufficiently absurd as seen in the light of the understanding alone, without regard to time and place, but the book is too weighty and too exalt-

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ed, independently of all ecclesiastical sanctions, and its use in the offices of religion; it is too venerable and sacred, too replete with the highest and deepest in human experience; too hallowed and endeared by sacred associations to be flippantly handled in any of its parts. Where so much is great and divine it is fair to presume that those passages which are most offensive to the critical sense admit of a view which shall vindicate, if not their historic or theological truth, their right to a place in the sacred literature of the nations and religions that have seen fit to preserve them. If the alternative were historic verity or wilful invention, infallible fact or meaningless falsehood, the honest critic must needs reject. But between the two there is a third more excellent way, — the way of reverent criticism.

There are several hypotheses which might be entertained of this story, all equally consistent with the credit of the author and the writing. It may have been a vision of the patriarch Abraham, — the

vision of a man who, though far in advance of his time, was not too enlightened to dream of personal converse with Jehovah. A vision which, passing in oral tradition from generation to generation, came at length to assume, by gradual but unintentional perversion, the form of historic statement. Or it may have been an allegory designed to illustrate moral truths and characteristic ancestral traits, which got incorporated with the history of the time. Or it may be what modern criticism terms a "*myth*," by which we understand not a wilful fabrication, but a compound of truth and fiction, — unintentional fiction, in which it is difficult, sometimes impossible, to find the boundary between the two, — a story containing a nucleus of historic truth, but grown in the lapse of time, by passage from mouth to mouth, by misapprehension of some of its reporters, by unconscious exaggeration or perversion, into something wide of the original fact. An instance of this mythical formation is the story of the "eleven thousand virgins,"

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said to have suffered martyrdom at Cologne, whose pretended bones are still exhibited in one of the churches of that city. The kernel of fact, in this case, was the martyrdom of a single maid whose Latin name, mispronounced or misheard, was taken for the number eleven thousand. Another such instance is supposed by some to be the story which makes St. Peter the first bishop of the Church of Rome, on the strength of a passage in one of the canonical Epistles in which the word Babylon is interpreted allegorically as signifying Rome. Another, still, is that which identifies St. Denis, the patron saint of France, with Dionysius the Areopagite, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. In the case before us — supposing the story to be a myth in this sense of the word — the latent germ of historic truth may have been some personal experience of the patriarch, the true nature of which it is impossible to determine, and which tradition, confounding together visions and passages of active life, embodied

in the form in which it is here presented.

Or, finally, suppose the passage to be pure invention, suppose it a poem in which the personality of Abraham and his residence in Mamre are the only historical elements. It is not surprising that poetry should turn to history in oral tradition. It would not by any means be the only instance in the Bible in which a poetic composition has got incorporated in the history of an epoch or an individual, and so fitted to the context in which it appears as to read like a part of the record, with nothing to mark the transition from fact to poetry and from poetry to fact. To cite but one instance of such interpolation, the dying charge of the patriarch Jacob to his twelve sons, in the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis, is a poem so inwoven with the history of the time as to form an integral part of the record, with no external indication and no announcement of the author to mark where poetry begins and history ends.

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This, I confess, is the view of the passage to which my own judgment inclines. I regard it as a poem of the class called Idyl, — a poem of unknown authorship and unknown antiquity, but belonging, no doubt, to the period of the first essays of Hebrew literature; not allegorical in the strict and technical sense, yet partaking somewhat of the characteristics of that species of composition; a poem whose chief aim is to glorify Abraham and with him the race of Israel, his favored progeny; to illustrate especially the one trait so distinct and distinguishing in the mighty patriarch, that prevailing consciousness of God which the Scripture terms “faith,” and by virtue of which Abraham is become a typical and representative personage, not to Israel only, but to all the race of Shem, — the hero and prototype of trusting piety. As such he is presented to the Christian mind by St. Paul: “Know, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” A further and secondary purpose seems to have dic-

tated the latter portion of this composition,—the colloquy regarding the fate of Sodom. Here the design is apparently to vindicate the relatives of Abraham residing in Sodom—the family of Lot—from the charge of universal corruption pronounced on that fated city; with perhaps an allegorical intimation of the saving power of the righteous few in the midst of a “wicked and perverse generation.”

In order to fully appreciate the high significance of this fragment of primeval literature, we must form in our minds a true conception of the personality of Abraham and the place he once occupied in the Hebrew imagination as Israel's ancestral hero, great-grandsire of the princely Joseph, Lord Chancellor of Egypt, prime-minister of the first Sesostris, the chief of that illustrious line. And Abraham has wider relations. He is one of the great leaders of human kind. In him we have the first monotheist; and not only so, but the earliest historic personality, the first historic individual who is anything more to us than

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X But see Melchisedec, was
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a name. Others there are antecedent to Abraham by thousands of years,— actual personages, it may be,— but none other of whom enough has survived to give the impression of a marked personality, no earlier actor in the scenes of time of whose character and way of life we can form a distinct conception. This is the first figure in the world's annals who presents a definite image to the mind. In this sense he is the ancestor, not of the people of Israel only, but of universal man.

Such is the sublime, the sacred import to all succeeding time of that primeval personality which bears the name of Abraham, and whose indelible impress, as stamped on his age, is preserved to us in the Bible. Of such an individual it must needs be that every authentic tradition would be gathered up and religiously preserved by a grateful and admiring posterity. And, not only so, but connected therewith there would almost of necessity arise in time a host of *sagas*, a mass of legendary and mythic lore such as gathers around all

Providential men, a miscellaneous growth in which grains of fact are so blent with allegory and fable that criticism cannot always separate the nucleus of historic truth from the nebula of fiction which envelops it.

Concerning such an one tales would be framed and poems composed as codicils to the genuine original story, — supplemental illustrations of his spirit and life. The narrative in question, describing the visit of Jehovah to Abraham and the conference between them, may be supposed to be one of these poems, unmetrical in form,* but exhibiting in structure, spirit, and design the essential marks of poetic composition, — an imaginary sketch of patriarchal life, a poetic bodying forth of spiritual truth.

As a poem, then, as a Hebrew Idyl, this writing is not to be judged by the standard of our time, least of all by modern Christian conceptions of the Godhead. Its

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representations are such as were current in the childhood of the race, when the infinite God could be supposed to appear in human form and hold personal, visible, and oral converse with man. Considered in this aspect, the Hebrew poem may fairly challenge comparison in matter, if not in form, in force of conception, in vivid coloring and sensuous imagination, still more in moral earnestness and spiritual truth, with the best in its kind of classic antiquity. There has come down to us a Latin poem of Ovid, a writer of the Augustan age, embodying a Greek mythological tradition, — the story of Baucis and Philémon, — which offers in one or two points a curious parallel with this of the Pentateuch. Two Olympian deities, Jove and Mercury, visit in disguise the cottage of a Phrygian shepherd.* They are hospitably received by him and his wife, who exert themselves to provide a fit entertainment for the unknown guests. So far the parallel holds good, and the scene and char-

* Ovid, *Metamorph.*, VIII. 630.

acters are drawn with exquisite beauty by the Roman poet. But the sequel exhibits the superior strain of the Hebrew. The hospitality of Baucis and Philemon is rewarded by converting their house into a temple, by making them the ministering servants, the priest and priestess, of the new sanctuary, and granting them an equal term of years. In the case of Abraham the same virtue is requited with the promise of the long-desired succession, and a blessing which extends through distant generations, embracing the whole earth in its gracious scope. "And the Lord said Abraham shall surely become a

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him."

¹⁶⁻⁷ The crowning beauty of the Hebrew narrative is Abraham's plea for the city of Sodom. To his intercession it is promised that if ten righteous be found within its gates the city shall not be destroyed for the sake of those ten. Here the story assumes an allegorical character, and, under the guise of a special local application,

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shadows forth a universal moral truth,—the saving influence of moral worth in human society. Cities and nations are saved by the righteous that dwell in them, not by arts or arms. The health of a country is not its commerce nor its agriculture, not its exports nor its imports; neither its military organization nor its civil constitution, its legislation nor its judiciary, but its conscience; i. e. the moral elevation of its citizens. A recent historian is at pains to prove that the progress of society is due to the intellectual rather than the moral powers. Be that as it may, it is very certain that the *preservation* of society depends on the moral rather than the intellectual. Suppose a community in which activity of mind has reached its maximum, in which all the faculties are at work, all the arts that minister to human well-being duly cultivated and successfully practised, in which intellectual development is more advanced and more universal than the world has yet known it at its best estate.

But while the material prosperity attendant on this intellectual development is at its height, suppose a sudden stagnation of the moral life, a general corruption of the moral sense; suppose the conscience of such a community paralyzed; suppose a consequent decline and final dying out of all the virtues, a state in which probity, fidelity, continence, sobriety, brotherly kindness, and charity are extinct, and where unqualified selfishness and unbridled lust universally prevail. How long in such a state would material prosperity endure? How long would mental activity continue to advance or refuse to recede? How long would arts and laws, how long would the state itself survive the dissolution of the moral life? Who does not see that moral qualities are the only sure guaranties of intellectual progress, that the virtues of society are its ultimate bondsmen, and righteousness the bulwark of the state? On the other hand, the conservative power of righteousness exceeds its diffusion. It is not to be

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measured by the number of those to whom that character may be ascribed. The number of such in any community is comparatively small, but society survives through their saving power. The Swedish statesman was surprised to find with how little wisdom the world is governed. The Christian moralist has equal cause for wonder when he thinks with how little virtue the world is saved,—with how few examples of supreme worth; when he thinks how small the number of the moral heroes of history compared with those who have made themselves a name and won enduring renown by secular enterprise, by military prowess or intellectual gifts. But to these it is due that the latter have found opportunity of action and had their place in the world. To the moral heroes of history it is due that there ever was a history of human kind to be written, that there is a history now to be read, that human society continues to this day. Without these it had perished long ago through utter corruption, whelmed in its own

ruins, leaving no trace of itself in a world dispeopled of civilized kinds and abandoned forever to savage tribes. There never was an age and never a city or state in which moral corruption was not too rife. In such as survive the ever-threatening destruction and death it is the more prevailing virtue of the few which overcomes the abounding vice of the many, and rights at last the sinking world. In every age those "ten righteous" have been the saviors of their time. They have saved it with their excellent works and the more excelling beauty of their lives. Without ostensibly combining for that end, with no visible conspiring, without art or device, or shrewd organization, or policy or plot; by being what they are, and living what they are from the heart of faith, by walking uprightly, doing justice, and loving mercy, in their several spheres; with the still conservatism and counter-attraction of miraculous goodness, they have kept the world from going to pieces with the wear and tear

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and centrifugal strain of disintegrating vice.

Those "ten righteous" are the secret and immortal cabal which unconsciously plots the preservation of the state, as selfishness and low chicanery and political intrigue are forever plotting its destruction.

But this idyl shadows forth another truth quite as important as the one implied by the writer — it is that there is in man a moral standard which rules all things, not only our ideas of what is expedient in practical matters must conform to it, but we even test our conception of religion by it. Abraham asks, Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? — That is, Shall God himself receive the same eternal law which I am called to obey? Shall I, as a creature, be allowed to follow a faculty by which we measure all thoughts and all actions, which human or divine? The same spirit which dwells in us, also dwells in him. The law which binds the right is as binding to the perfect Creator as it is on the souls which he creates.

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THE HERITAGE OF THE INNER LIFE.



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"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide." — GENESIS xxiv. 63.

A SINGLE trait will often reveal the individual to whom it pertains as truly as a finished portrait. We know very little of the second of those immortal three whom the Hebrew nation was so fond of naming in associated sequence,—the ancestral *trio* from whom they derived their origins and their God. Much less of Isaac do we know than of Abraham his father or Jacob his son. These fill a large space in the annals of that people; they are prominent and very positive individualities. Abraham, the majestic sheik, the mighty Mesopotamian prince, the first monotheist, the first distinct historic personality, stands out in heroic relief on the canvas of tra-

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dition. Jacob, the self-seeking, calculating, plodding, intriguing, but also much enduring, patient, indefatigable adventurer, is also a marked and significant figure. Between these two, so unlike in intellectual and moral worth, but resembling each other in force and enterprise, the record presents, like an interpolation of a foreign stock, the mild apparition of passive, meditative Isaac, a man with as little of the hero in his composition as any whose name has come down to us. Very little is said of him by the annalist, in comparison with the other two, for the reason, I suppose, that there was little to say. He was not one of those who make history, or of whom history makes much. A passive nature, moulded by circumstance, easily persuaded, obeying foreign guidance; on no occasion do we find him taking the initiative, or striking out a path for himself. In the most important concern of his life, in the choice of a wife, although forty years old, he suffers the whole business to be managed for him by paternal authority; and

when the arrangements are completed accepts without question the woman whom his father's confidential servant had picked up, in a very accidental way,—the first he lighted on in Mesopotamia, whither Abraham had sent him for that purpose,—of whom he knew nothing but that she was fair to look upon and willing to emigrate in view of a promised husband.

- Driven by famine from Beersheba to Gerar, he imitates a device of his father in giving out that his wife is his sister. We are told that he “waxed great,” that is, rich after the manner of patriarchal prosperity, rich in flocks and herds, but we are not informed of any decisive act of his own by which that wealth was obtained, or by which he distinguished himself among his contemporaries. It is chiefly as a link in the line of patriarchal succession, as the son of Abraham and father of Jacob, that his name survives. The most characteristic thing recorded of him is his going out to meditate in the field at eventide, at a very critical period of his his-

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tory. This is all that one naturally remembers of Isaac except his narrow escape, when a boy, from the sacrificial knife, and the agony on his death-bed occasioned by the treachery of his wife, who conspired with her younger son to cheat him of the blessing intended for his favorite Esau.

But this going out to meditate is really characteristic, and marks the man more than anything else recorded of him. If he did so on this occasion, then probably often. I suppose it was his habit so to do. He was one of the meditative kind. In his case, as often happens, the want of active energy was compensated by disproportionate intensity of the inner life. A silent, brooding character, fond of his own company, glad to be alone, retiring from the world of affairs into the sanctuary of the mind.

The theme of the patriarch's meditations who will venture to guess? Another, at such a time, on the eve of marriage, expecting a wife by the next arrival from the East, would have been absorbed in

anticipations of the coming event, would have hastened to meet the promised bride, would have kept his eye fixed on the horizon to catch the first glimpse of the caravan charged with his fate. It is evident, I think, from the color of the narrative, that this was not Isaac's mood or intent. He went out "at eventide," not to meet his intended, like a bridegroom flush with expectation, impatient of delay, but to have a quiet evening stroll and "to meditate."

I infer from the nature of that term a mind preoccupied with other thoughts than those of impending domestic relations. The word implies more abstract speculation. "And he lifted up his eyes, and behold! the camels were coming." His eyes, it would seem, had been previously fixed on the ground, as one absorbed in speculation; intent, perhaps, on some of those great questions of Providence and destiny which have been at once the puzzle and delight of meditative minds in every age. Who knows? It was before the days of

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literature. Writing had not been invented. If the patriarch experienced intuitions, or had formed conclusions, on any of these themes, there was no opportunity of recording them, no provision, no medium for their transmission, except the very inadequate one of oral tradition, which retains only the gross idea or concrete fact, not the finer, subtiler thought, unless embodied in a parable or fable. But these finer thoughts do not always admit of being so embodied, nor do all who conceive them possess the artistic faculty required for such representation. And so the meditations of Isaac, and their theme, must be left to conjecture. Whatever they were, whether wise or foolish, shallow or profound, they are lost to posterity. He wrote no book, he composed no fable, or none that has come down in his name. And yet, on the ground of this slight intimation, I entertain the fancy that Isaac was a thinker and a seer, a man of contemplative habit and introverted mind, to whom, in rapt moods, came truths of mys-

tic import, and who lived and rejoiced in their light. Those evening meditations have not transpired; the topics of his musing and their results are lost to the world; but the musing spirit of the man was not lost,—it survived in his descendants, it became a distinguishing trait of the Hebrew race.

Compare that people with other nations of antiquity,—with the two best known to us by their history and works, the Greeks and Romans. What is it that first strikes us as constituting the main distinction between them? Beyond all question it is their religion. The religion of the Hebrews acknowledged and adored one only God. The religion of the Greeks and Romans believed in a multiplicity of gods; a separate divinity for every power in nature and every aspect of life. The God of the Hebrews was the infinite Spirit that made and rules the universe of things; the gods of the Greeks and Romans were partly impersonations of natural forces and partly deified men. They

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sought and saw their divinities in natural objects, in sun and moon, in thunder and rain, in mountains, woods, and rivers, in the passions of love and lust, and the fortunes of war. The Hebrews sought and found their God in the secret of the mind. It is the nature of monotheism to turn the thoughts of men inward, that of polytheism to fix them on things without. Accordingly, the Gentile religion favored external representations,—statues and games and theatrical shows; the Hebrew favored silent thought and devout aspiration. The one promoted plastic art, the other developed the interior life.

We may say, then, that the Hebrew mind was distinguished by its *inwardness*, the Hebrew race by the inwardness of their religion and all their intellectual life. We cannot deny to the Greeks and Romans, to the former especially, the credit of having produced great thinkers. Some of the greatest the world has known have been the product of Greek life. But the general drift of Greek culture was not

+ Still more does this quality distinguish the Hindu race — e.g. Buddha

in that direction. It tended rather to outward forms, to plastic and dramatic art. The genius of the Hebrews, on the contrary, was essentially religious; its legitimate expression was devout aspiration, prophecy and psalm. Every monument which we possess of the intellectual life of that people is, in one way or another, directly or indirectly concerned with religion.

Thus the spirit of silent, meditative Isaac reproduced itself in the life of his race through all the ages of their wondrous history. Less conspicuous in the record than the other two with whom his name is associated, — the one as father, the other as son, — a mute, undemonstrative, isolated figure between majestic Abraham and plodding, scheming, shuffling Jacob; he, too, has stamped his type on his descendants. His people still name him in the triad of progenitors who prefigured the fortunes of the race when the world was young, and will name him while a vestige of the race endures. The ancestral three have each bequeathed to their progeny

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one distinguishing trait. From Abraham the race derived the idea of one God, the original impulse of their monotheism. Father Jacob gave them the acquisitiveness, the calculating spirit of trade, and the long-suffering, which still distinguish them among all the peoples of the earth. The legacy of Isaac was the silent, brooding mind, the tendency to inwardness, less generally diffused, less frequently developed, less nationally prominent, but still, on the whole, as it seems to me, a characteristic trait.

It manifests itself with more or less distinctness in all the great worthies of Hebrew history. After ages of bondage, when the lights of the patriarchal world had faded into dim tradition, it reappeared in Moses, the deliverer of the sunken and oppressed race, the regenerator of Israel, who conversed with the long-forgotten God in the solitudes of Horeb, and evolved from his brooding mind, in lonely meditation, the great thought of the Hebrew theocracy. We see traces of it in Joshua

and Jephthah and Gideon, men of action though they were, whose calling was the sword. It manifests itself with intenser energy in the life of David, — also, and emphatically, a man of action ; but one who, amid all the distractions of war and all the disquietudes of regal office, found time for solitary self-communion, and deeply meditated the wonders of Divine Wisdom, and sung the guiding hand of the shepherd God. It lay at the foundation, and furnished the topics, and kindled the fire of the awfully sublime strains, the gorgeous visions, the burning invectives of the Hebrew prophets, from Joel to Malachi. Then, after an interval of centuries, it glowed again with renewed fervor in John the Baptist, who drew all Judæa to the wilderness to hear his warnings and receive from him the baptism of repentance. I need not say how large a constituent it was in the life of Jesus, the consummate flower of the nation's and the world's history. John of the Apocalypse saw in its light the fall of Rome and the

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splendors of the New Jerusalem. Paul was carried by it into the seventh heaven, "whether in the body or out of the body," he could not tell. In later time Maimonides, by means of it, divined the deeper import of the Hebrew Scripture. And, later still, Spinoza, profoundest of modern Israelites, — cast out of the synagogue, — found in it the dawn of a new day and a peace from the bosom of God which the jar of the world could not disturb and persecution assailed in vain.

Thus the spirit of Isaac, the inward-looking, thoughtful, brooding spirit lived, and, it may be, still lives in his descendants. The predisposition to interior life was his bequest to the Hebrew race. And who does not see that all which that race have been to the world, all that Isaac's posterity have done for mankind, is due to the wealth and force of their interior life. As a civil power, they have never flourished with anything like the vigor and spread of other nations. Even in the time of Solomon, the golden age of their prosperity,

the extent of their dominion was very limited, their foreign power insignificant compared with the mighty monarchies that bordered and finally overwhelmed them. Shut up in the narrow territory of Palestine, with a landlocked capital, — few facilities of commerce and meagre industrial development, — they present a contemptible figure in political history. But what people among all the races of men has obtained such moral sway and exerted an influence so broad and deep on the world of mankind? What has any other of the nations of antiquity contributed to human growth and well-being that deserves to be compared with the blessing conferred on humanity by Isaac's line? Take the most powerful of them all, the strong, imperial Roman, whose legions subdued the earth, whose empire stretched from Egypt to Britain, from the Caspian to the Straits of Gibraltar, the traces of whose power are visible in most of the countries of Europe to this day; what, on the whole, have the Romans done for man-

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kind? Something in the way of civilization. In the way of civil jurisdiction much. A body of laws they have given to the world which still remains the noblest monument of legislation, and is still received as the best in that kind. The Greeks have given us letters and the highest models of beautiful art. But these benefactions, precious as they are in themselves, are comparatively light when weighed in the balance with that supreme blessing conferred on the world by the Hebrew race, — the Christian religion with its civilizing, humanizing, world-enlightening, saving power. Grecian letters and Roman jurisprudence failed to preserve the ancient world from dissolution and corruption. And when that world was tumbling into ruin, when decay was stealing over all the glories and grace of life, and death was sapping the heart of society; then, from the depth of the inner life, enkindled in a prophet of the Hebrew race, God sent forth his Spirit to renew the face of the earth. Man heard once more the genuine

accent of faith, and lived again. The gospel,

“Through a world of death,
Breathed into him a second breath
More searching than the breath of spring.”

Considered solely as a means of civilization, as an agent in extending the human family, — or the better and more progressive portion of it, — as an agent in worthily and profitably occupying the habitable earth, Christianity outweighs all other agencies, and all the products of human invention. And Christianity, so far as race and nation are concerned in its genesis, is a growth of the Hebrew stem, a birth from that interior spiritual life so characteristic of the Hebrew race. It was born of Jewish parentage, it was cradled in Jewish conventicles, it went forth from Jerusalem in the charge of Jewish men. From the bosom of Judaism came the mightiest power that has ever swayed mankind.

Thus flowered and culminated the spirit of meditation which Judah inherited from

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Isaac, and thus was fulfilled the promise given to the arch-father of monotheism, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," and, in that seed "shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

The quantity and force of the inner life in the thoughtful men of a nation is a measure of the greatness which that nation is destined to realize in its own future, or of which it is to be the source and occasion to other lands. The thoughtful men of England in the sixteenth century were the Puritans. The ruling powers of the nation, king, lords, and bishops, despised and persecuted and cast them out. But from them came the overthrow of the evil dynasty that sought to crush them. From them came England's subsequent greatness; and from them came the greatest in energy and promise of existing nations. American growth, American freedom, the polity of these States, their commerce, industry, and westward-pushing progress, are the latest outcome of the inner life, whose first fruit was Puritanism.

The whole Arabian civilization which flourished with so much splendor in the Middle Age, far surpassing the Christian world of that time in science and art, was the natural growth of the faith which originated in the brooding mind of Mohammed, also a descendant of Abraham, in whom, I think, the great progenitor is more apparent than in any of Isaac's seed.

In fine, whatever is grandest and best and most enduring in human achievements is directly or indirectly the issue and fruit of the inner life. Whoever has conceived in himself any fruitful, world-renewing thought, whoever has proposed to himself any arduous and saving work or mission, has been guided thereto by secret meditation. Alone, in the wilderness, battling with self and the world, the Son of Man laid fast the foundations of the Christian ages. In the solitudes of monastic seclusion the great Reformer and father of Protestantism received into his soul the new evangile of faith and freedom.

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The solitary thinkers, they are the world's rulers, they are the creators, they are the future, they are fate. In lonely self-communion the mind encounters the primordial powers that have the shaping of our own and the world's destinies. There in their secret laboratory the silent *mothers*, Reason, Imagination, Faith, and Will, devise and mould the coming time. Who can guess what new births of social life, what new dispensations of the Spirit, are yet to spring from that unknown world which contains the archetypes and rudiments of all things?

Man has searched creation through in quest of knowledge: he has looked into every corner of the habitable globe, he has studied the products of every zone, he has sounded the seas and measured the heavens, he has noted the structure of every creature and the path of every star; there is no inquiry so arduous which he has not attempted, no science so perplexing which he has not pursued. He has made himself acquainted with the world of his sur-

rounding. But that inner world, enclosed within the walls of the fleshly frame, the world of ideas, so bounded in space, so boundless in wealth and capacity, who shall fathom? The possibilities of material nature we are fast ascertaining and may hope one day to fully explore and comprehend. But the possibilities of the Spirit, of life as shaped by the Spirit, who can divine? "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." We know not what the future has in store for the race. But when we compare the idea in our mind with the facts of life there opens to our thought an inexhaustible field of moral enterprise, an interminable prospect of ends to be achieved and victories won.

God be thanked for the limitless longing, the unquenchable hope; for the unwritten leaves in the Book of Fate; for the unknown wealth and incalculable powers of the inner life!

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